Mangalashtakam of Sri Raja Rajeshwara Tirtha

English Commentary
by
Sri Hunsur Sriprasad

Author’s foreword

I offer my devotional salutations to His Holiness Sri 1008 Sri Raja Rajeshwara yati. Even in a short work of 9 verses he gives us a glimpse of his intellectual prowess, just as Lord Krishna showed the entire universe in his mouth. In 8 verses he lists all divine and auspicious entities and beings that we should pray to. It is without doubt the best of its kind and has no parallel in any language in the world.

I take this opportunity to offer my bhakti poorvaka saashtaanga pranamas to His Holiness Sri 1008 Vidyaadheesha Shripadangalu of Palimara Matha. Without his blessings, inspiration and encouragement this work would not have completed or even launched. I feel blessed to have been the recipient of his grace and benediction.

The starting point for this work was a book titled “Sri Raja Rajeshwarateerthavirachitam Mangalaashtakam” by Sri Matapaadi Kumaraswamy, published by Palimara Matha. This book is a rough compilation of a series of lectures delivered by His Holiness on this topic. His Holiness was very keen to get this book translated into English so that this wonderful could reach a much wider audience. This desire is a reflection of the deep devotion His Holiness has towards Sri Raja Rajeshwara yati and his reverence for this mangalaashtaka.

I sincerely believe that I was chosen for this holy task as a culmination of the good deeds done by me in many births and by the blessings of my illustrious parents Sri Hunsur Krishnamurthy and Smt. Saroja Bai. I thank my good friend and guide Sri Raghunandan for suggesting my name to His Holiness for this noble task.

I wish to express my deep gratitude and salutations to Dr. Bannanje Govindacharya, the doyen amongst Madhva scholars. His book on this topic is a magnificent tribute to the mangalaashtaka and it is obvious that he has poured his heart and soul into this work. He has spared no effort in making this a complete and comprehensive reference on all the concepts mentioned in this work. It is virtually a treasure house for anybody wishing to delve deep into the mangalaashtaka. It is a reflection of his encyclopedic knowledge and mastery over shastras. This wonderful book made my efforts a lot easier. I offer my bhakti poorvaka saashtaanga pranamas to him.

I wish to thank<xxxx> for doing the DTP work on this book and producing a beautiful output.
Hunsur Sriprasad

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Mangalaashtakam
Sri Raja Rajeshwara yati

Introduction

‘ashTa’ means eight in Sanskrit. ‘ashTaka’ means octet or a set of eight items. Normally it is used to describe any poetic composition that has 8 verses, with a ninth verse to list the benefits of reciting the ashTaka. Mangala means auspicious or propitious. So a mangalaashtaka is a set of 8 (or 9) verses whose recitation or utterance brings us auspiciousness.

There are plenty of ashTakas in devotional literature. Krishnaashtaka, Hariyashtaka, etc are some well known ashtakas. However there is nothing comparable to the one composed by Sri Raja Rajeshwara yati. In just 8 verses this mangalaashtaka provides a panoramic view of the entire universe, drawing our attention towards all divine and auspicious entities and beings that are worth of being extolled. No other ashtaka provides such a sweeping coverage of all auspicious beings. Singing this mangalaashtaka during weddings is very common and done by people of different castes and creeds. This is a testimony to the popularity of this work and its universal appeal.

About the Author - Sri Raja Rajeshwara yati (1400 – 1440 AD)

Phalimar matha (monastery) is one of the 8 mathas established by Acharya Madhva. Sri Hrisheekesha teertha, the first disciple of Acharya Madhva, was the first pontiff of this matha. He was followed by Sri SammaatmEsha teertha, Sri Sambhava teertha Sri Aparaajita teertha and Sri Vidyaamoorthi teertha. Sri Vidyaamoorthi teertha gave sanyasa to a young boy and named him Sri Raja rAjeshwara yati. He was a great scholar whose brilliance mirrored those of his guru (Sri Vidyaamoorthi teertha) and his parama guru (Sri Aparaajita teertha).

Sri Raja rAjeshwara yati was also blessed with poetic talent. In addition to this Mangalaashtaka, he has also composed another work called "Sri Raama sandesha". In this, he has beautifully captured the essence of Raamayana, just as he has captured all the salient points of the universe in the Mangalaashtaka. Scholars consider this work to be a monument to his mastery over poetry. These two works give us an idea of his greatness as a scholar. He travelled throughout the country in his youth and accumulated a lot of experience. In addition to his poetic brilliance he was also a very great scholar. Nyaaya shaastra, considered to be a challenge for any scholar, was like child's play for him. He was feted everywhere for his scholarship and his saintliness. The king of Kantaavara was so impressed by his scholarship that he gifted him an entire village. He had this gift inscribed on an inscription and declared that all the revenue accruing from that village was to be used by the authorities of Phalimaar Matha. Sri Raja rAjeshwara yati passed away at a fairly young age without taking over the reins of the Matha. That is why his name ends with ‘yati’ and not ‘teertha’ (‘teertha is the honorific given to a person who becomes the peeThaadhipati or Head of the Matha). The brindaavana of this great soul is present in the main complex of Phalimar matha. Incidentally, this is the oldest brindaavana in the Phalimar lineage as brindaavanas of ascetics preceding him are not known.

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Chandas (Poetic metre):

The entire work is in 'shArdUla vikrIdita' Chandas. This is the same metre used in the first half of the first verse of Nakha stuti ('paantvasmaan puruhUta …pratyEka vajraayita). The second verse of nakha stuti ('lakshmIkaanta samantatopi …brahmEsha shakrOtokara)' is completely in this metre.

In this metre, each line consists of 19 characters, arranged as follows – ma, sa, ja, sa, ta, ta and a guru (GGG LLG LGL LLG GGL GGL G). There is a 'yati' or logical break after the 12^{th} and the 19^{th} characters.

Structure of the mangalaashtaka :

In the first verse he extols Lord Hari (Vishnu), the Almighty and supreme entity. He mentions Lakshmi and all the major male gods or celestial beings who are worshipped on Earth but does this in an interesting way. He shows how they are connected to the Lord and how they serve Him. He starts with the auspicious word "Lakshmi".

In the second verse he expands the list of gods mentioned in the first verse and identifies the main celestials we need to venerate. Here he includes their wives also but does not mention them by name.

In the third verse he identifies all the major sages and ascetics mentioned in shastra. He says they have sought refuge in the Lord's lotus feet and are thus venerable to us.

In the fourth verse he lists all the main emperors and kings who ruled over Earth. In this list he includes Raama also, even though He is an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

In the fifth verse he lists all the major mountains and hills that are venerated in shastra. Some of these are physical structures that are documented in maps and some are mystical, visible only to gyanis and celestials.

In the sixth verse he lists all holy Indian rivers that are known to shastra and worshipped for their ability to cleanse humans of their sins. His focus is not on the physical river that is visible to everybody but on the divine entity who regulates the river and maintains its sanctity.

The universe consists of two layers – roopaatmaka and naamaatmaka prapanchas. The first one is the collection of all objects having name and form that constitute the physical world; the second is the literary world. Having listed all entities in the roopaatmaka prapanch in the first six verses, he moves on the naamatmaka prapancha in the seventh verse. Here he lists all major literary forms like Vedas, Upanishad, Puraanas, Vedanta etc.

In the eight verse he lists all the major constructs and concepts in the area of astrology and astronomy. He also covers major divisions of time like samvatsara (year), maasa (month) etc.

In the ninth and final verse he documents the benefits that accrue to anyone who recites this mangalaashtaka . He says it can confer all desires and destroy all inauspiciousness. The person who recites this during a wedding and other auspicious events, or during Sandhyaakaala (dawn and dusk), obtains Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth) and all other desires

Verse 1:

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ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮೀರ್ಯಸ್ಯ ಪರಿಗ್ರಹಃ ಕಮಲಭೂಃ ಸೂನುರ್ಗರುತ್ಮಾನ್ ರಥಃ
ಪೌತ್ರಶ್ಚಂದ್ರವಿಭೂಷಣಃ ಸುರಗುರುಃ ಶೇಷಶ್ಚ ಶಯ್ಯಾ ಪುನಃ ।
ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಾಂಡಂ ವರಮಂದಿರಂ ಸುರಗಣಾ ಯಸ್ಯ ಪ್ರಭೋಃ ಸೇವಕಾಃ
ಸ ತ್ರೈಲೋಕ್ಯಕುಟುಂಬಪಾಲನಪರಃ ಕುರ್ಯಾದ್ಧರಿರ್ಮಂಗಲಮ್ ॥ ೧ ॥

लक्ष्मीर्यस्य परिग्रहः कमलभूः सूनुर्गरुत्मान् रथः
पौत्रश्चंद्रविभूषणः सुरगुरुः शेषश्च शय्या पुनः ।
ब्रह्माण्डं वरमन्दिरं सुरगणा यस्य प्रभोः सेवकाः
स त्रैलोक्यकुटुम्बपालनपरः कुर्याद्धरिर्मङ्गलम् ॥ १ ॥

lakShmIryasya parigrahaH kamalabhUH sUnurgarutmaan rathaH
poutrashchaMdravibhUShaNaH suraguruH shEShashcha shayyaa punaH |
brahmaaMDaM varamandiraM suragaNaa yasya prabhOH sEvakaaH
sa trailOkyakuTuMbapaalanaparaH kuryaaddharirmangalam || 1 ||

Meaning:

May Lord Hari

- whose wife is Lakshmi
- whose son is the Lotus-born Brahma
- whose chariot is Garuda
- whose grandson is adorned with Chandra (Shiva)
- whose bed is Shesha
- who has the entire brahmAnda as his shrine or temple
- who has the entire pantheon of gods as his servants
- who is engrossed in nurturing the jIvas (living beings) in the three worlds as his family

(may this Lord) bless us with auspiciousness.

Sri Raja Rajeshwara Yati starts the mangalaashtaka with the very auspicious name of Lakshmi.

It is appropriate that the Lord is addressed as Hari. This is the form that frees us from sorrow and bondage (haratE iti hari). It may be noted that even NaaraayaaNa varma also starts with “hari”.

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The Vishnu sahasranAma says the Lord is the purest of the pure, the most auspicious amongst all auspicious entities and most sacred amongst all sacred entities (pavitraanaaM pavitram, mangalaanaaM mangalam).

"Kamala" is also an epithet of Lakshmi. The author perhaps uses this name for a reason. At the beginning of creation, four forms emanated from the mula rUpa (Narayana). These forms are Aniruddha, Pradyumna, Sankarshana and Vasudeva. Lakshmi took on the forms of Shaanti, Kruti, Jayaa and Maayaa to serve the Lord. Brahma was born to Maaya and Vasudeva. Vaayu was born to Jayaa and Sankarshana. Saraswati and Bhaarati were born as twins to Kruti and Pradyumna. Thus the epithet 'kamala bhU' can mean Brahma, Vaayu, Saraswati and Bharati. Since the word 'sUnu' (son) is also used, we may restrict this to Brahma and Vaayu.

The author chooses the word "pari-graha" to indicate wife for a specific reason. The true meaning of 'pari-graha' or 'paritaH grahya' means one who is held from all sides. This is very true for Lakshmi and Vishnu because they are always together, at all times and in all places. The Lord is the source of Lakshmi's strength and exalted position in the hierarchy of gods ("yasmaad brahma rudrendra devataanaam shriyOpi cha gyana sphoorti sadaa tasmai haraye gurave namaH") .

Verse 2:

ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಾ ವಾಯುಗಿರೀಶಶೇಷಗರುಡಾ ದೇವೇಂದ್ರಕಾಮೌ ಗುರುಃ
ಚಂದ್ರಾರ್ಕೌ ವರುಣಾನಲೌ ಮನುಯಮೌ ವಿತ್ತೇಶವಿಘ್ನೇಶ್ವರೌ
ನಾಸತ್ಯೌ ನಿರೃತಿರ್ಮರುದ್ಗಣಯುತಾಃ ಪರ್ಜನ್ಯಮಿತ್ರಾದಯಃ
ಸಸ್ತ್ರೀಕಾಃ ಸುರಪುಂಗವಾಃ ಪ್ರತಿದಿನಂ ಕುರ್ವಂತು ನೋ ಮಂಗಲಮ್ ॥ ೨ ॥

ब्रह्मा वायुगिरीशशेषगरुडा देवेन्द्रकामौ गुरुः
चंद्रार्कौ वरुणानलौ मनुयमौ वित्तेशविघ्नेश्वरौ
नासत्यौ निरृतिर्मरुद्गणयुताः पर्जन्यमित्रादयः
सस्त्रीकाः सुरपुङ्गवाः प्रतिदिनं कुर्वन्तु नो मङ्गलम् ॥ २ ॥

brahma vaayugirIshashEShagaruDaa dEvEndrakaamou guruH
chandraarkou varuNaanalou manuyamou vittEshavighnEshvarou
naasatyou nirRutirmarudgaNayutaaH parjanyamitraadayaH
sastrIkaaH surapuMgavaaH pratidinaM kurvaMtu nO mangalam || 2 ||

Meaning:

May the following exalted Gods, along with their wives, bless us with auspiciousness, every day:

- Brahma
- Vaayu

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- Shiva
- Shesha
- Garuda
- Devendra (Indra)
- Kaama (Manmatha)
- Guru (Bruhaspati)
- Ravi (Sun), Chandra (Moon)
- Varuna (patron god for water, especially Oceans and Seas)
- Anala (aka Agni or Fire)
- Swaayambhuva Manu
- Yama
- Kubera, Ganesha, Ashwini devatas
- Niruti (the guardian of the South West direction), marud gana
- Parjanya, Mitra

The above is a good cross section sample of the pantheon of gods. However, it is not a full listing of the hierarchy of gods. The author has included portions of the hierarchy to keep the length of the verse manageable. See Appendix 1 for a full listing of the hierarchy.

Our scriptures talk of 8 deities guarding the 8 cardinal directions; the verse covers all 8 as shown below. The intent is to pray for auspiciousness from all directions.

Direction	**Deity**
East	Indra / Mitra
South-East	Agni
South	Yama
South-West	Nirruti
West	Varuna
North-West	(kONa) Vaayu
North	Kubera / Chandra
North-East	Ishaana (Shiva)

Aditi and Kashyapa have 12 sons, out of which the eldest is the Sun god (who has other names like Ravi, Vivasvaan etc). The youngest is Vaamana (the 5th of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu in this manvantara). Some of the others are Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Bhaga, Poosha etc. These 12 are collectively called Adityas (sons of Aditi), but most people associate 'Aditya' with the Sun god. He has blessed mankind with life sustaining heat and light; in today's world, people also generate electricity from solar energy.

Parjanya is the god regulating rain bearing clouds.

Brahma's one day is equal to 43,20,000 years. (See Appendix 2 for more details about yugas, manvantaras and manus) Brahma's day is divided into 14 manvantaras or periods. Each manvantara has a Manu (Ruler). The first manu was svaayambhuva manu. This is the manu referred to in this verse. Incidentally, we are in the 7th manvantara, with vaivasvat (son of vivasvAn or Sun) as the manu. He is also indirectly referred to in this verse.

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Verse 3:

ವಿಶ್ವಾಮಿತ್ರಪರಾಶರೌರ್ವಭೃಗವೋಽಗಸ್ತ್ಯಃ ಪುಲಸ್ತ್ಯಃ ಕ್ರತುಃ
ಶ್ರೀಮಾನತ್ರಿಮರೀಚ್ಯುಚಥ್ಯಪುಲಹಾಃ ಶಕ್ತಿರ್ವಸಿಷ್ಠೋಽಂಗಿರಾಃ
ಮಾಂಡವ್ಯೋ ಜಮದಗ್ನಿಗೌತಮಭರದ್ವಾಜಾದಯಸ್ತಾಪಸಾಃ
ಶ್ರೀಮದ್ ವಿಷ್ಣುಪದಾಂಬುಜೈಕಶರಣಾಃ ಕುರ್ವಂತು ನೋ ಮಂಗಲಮ್ ॥ ೩ ॥

विश्वामित्रपराशरौर्वभृगवोऽगस्त्यः पुलस्त्यः क्रतुः
श्रीमानत्रिमरीच्युचथ्यपुलहाः शक्तिर्वसिष्ठोऽङ्गिराः
माण्डव्यो जमदग्निगौतमभरद्वाजादयस्तापसाः
श्रीविष्णोः पदांबुजैकशरणाः कुर्वन्तु नो मङ्गलम् ॥ ३ ॥

vishvaamitraparaasharourvabhRugavO&gastyaH pulastyaH kratuH
shrImaanatrimarIchyuchathyapulahaaH shaktirvasiShThO&MgiraaH
maanDavyO jamadagnigoutamabharadwaajaadayastaapasaaH
shrImad viShNupadaaMbujaikasharaNaaH kurvantu nO mangalam || 3 ||

Introduction:

Acharya Madhva says that great Rishis who meditate on Lord Vishnu after having subdued the six enemies (lust, anger, delusion, greed, arrogance and jealousy) have the ability to free those who approach them from sorrow ("ShaDvarga nigraha nirasta samasta dOShA dyaayanti viShNum RuShayO yadapaanga lEsham | AshrItya yaanapi samEtya na yaati duHkhaM"). Sri Raja Rajeshwara Yati supplements Acharya Madhva's words by listing18 of the most prominent Raja Rishis and Brahma Rishis who have graced this land and asks us to obtain their grace and blessings.

Meaning:

May the following sages, who seek sanctuary only in the Lord's feet, bless us with auspiciousness:

- Vishvaamitra
- Paraashara
- Ourva
- Bhrugu
- Agastya
- Pulastya
- KratuH

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- Atri
- Mareechi
- Uchatya
- Pulaha
- Shakti
- VasishTha
- Angiras
- MaanDavya
- Jamadagni
- Goutama
- Bhaaradwaaja

Notes:

As stated earlier, every Manvantara has an associated Manu and 7 sages (sapta rishis). The sapta-rishis of the first manvantara (Swaayambhuva) are Mareechi, Atri, Angiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasishta. The sapta-rishis of the current Vaivaswata Manvantara are – Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Vishvaamitra, Goutama, Jamadagni and Bhaaradwaaja. Out of these, Atri and Vasishta are common to both manvantaras. So, there are 12 rishis covering both manvantaras. Out of these, the Mangalaashtaka omits Kashyapa and covers the others. 11, omitting Kashyapa. It adds 7 names not covered by the 12; these are Bhrugu, Paraashara, Ourva, Agastya, Uchatya, Shakti, Maandavya

The Manu of the first manvantara was Swaayambhoo. His wife was Shataroopa devi and they had two sons (Priyavrata and Uttaanapaada), and three daughters (Aakooti, Devahooti and Prasooti). Manu gave his first daughter Āakooti in marriage to sage Ruchi, the second daughter Devahooti to sage Kardama, and the youngest, Prasooti, to the celestial Daksha. Kardama and Devahooti had 9 daughters and one son. The son was Lord Kapila, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu.

The sapta-rishis of Swayambhoo Manvantara along with Bhrugu and Atharva are called the Nava-prajaapatis; these 9 are responsible for the start of Creation. Kardama muni gave his 9 daughters in marriage to the 9 prajapatis as listed below.

Prajapati	**Wife**	**Prajapati**	**Wife**	**Prajapati**	**Wife**
Mareechi	Kala	Pulastya	Havirbhuk	Bhrugu	Khyaati
Atri	Anasooya	Pulaha	Gati	Vasishta	Arundhati
Angiras	Shraddha	Kratu	Kriya	Atharva	Shaanti

Mareechi:

Mareechi was the son of Brahma. He was the father of Kashyapa, who is main originator of mankind and all living beings. Mareechi is considered to be the moola-purusha (founder) of the Sun dynasty. His daughter was Poornima, the abhimaani devata for the full moon day.

Atri – the father of the Trimurtis:

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Atri was the moola-purusha (founder) of the Moon dynasty. He was the husband of Anasooya. He prevailed over lust, anger and greed and earned the name ‘atri’ (‘a’ means devoid of, ‘tri’ – the three bad qualities = lust, anger and greed). His three sons were dattaatrEya (an incarnation of Vishnu), doorvaasa (incarnation of Shiva) and Chandra (moon). Since Brahma does not incarnate on earth, he had a special presence (AvEsha) in Chandra.

Angiras

Angiras was another son of Brahma. He and Shraddha had 4 daughters in Swayambhoo manvantara – Sineevaali, Kuhoo, Raakaa and Anumati. Sineevaali is the abhimaani of Amaavaasya (New moon day) which has a taint of Chaturdashi (ie., the day started as Krishna Chaturdashi but turned into Amavasya later in the day). Kuhoo is the abhimaani of the pure Amaavaasya which is untainted with Chaturdashi. Similarly, Anumati is the abhimaani of the Poornima (Full moon) that is tainted with Prathama (i.e. day started off as Poornima but turned into Prathama late in the night). Raakaa is the abhimaani of the pure Full moon day that is untainted with Prathama.

In SvaarOchisha Manvantara Angirasa and Shraddha had 2 sons - Bruhaspati, the preceptor of the Gods, and Uchatya. Uchatya was the purohit of Indra for some time.

Pulastya – the grandfather of Ravana:

Pulastya was another son of Brahma. His son in the first manvantara was Agastya (see section on Agastya). In another manvantara he had another son named Vishravas. Vishravas had two wives – iLibiLE and Kaikasi (a raakshasi). Kubera was born to Vishravas and iLibiLE. That is why he is called Vaishravana. Vishravas had four children with Kaikasi – Raavana, Kumbhakarana, Vibheeshana and Shoorpanakha. Since Raavana is the grand son of Pulastya he is also called Poulastya. Raavana was born in a lineage of brahmin saints but had no brahmanic or saintly qualities. He got his demonic nature from his mother.

Pulaha:

Pulaha was another son of brahma. He had 3 sons – KaamashrEshTha, Vareeyan and SahishNu. They all became great sages but not much is known about them as they find very little mention in puraaNas.

Kratu – the force behind yagnas:

Kratu, another son of Brahma, is the presiding deity for yagnas. All yagnas and yaagas are performed under his benign direction and blessings. His wife was Kriya, the abhimaani of all actions. They had 60,000 sons – the famous Vaalakhilyas.

Valakhilyas are thumb sized ascetics accompanying the sun in its every day travel in the sky. They shine like brilliant lights because of their severe penance. They are said to hang upside down in the trees while doing penance. They are mantra-drashtaaras (seers of vedic hymn). They are the rishis of the 11 Vaalakhilya hymns found in the appendix of the eighth Mandala of the Rig Veda.

Vasishta – the rAja guru of Sun dynasty and great grandfather of Vedavyasa

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Vasishta was the maanasa putra of Brahma (a son conceived through the intellect) in Svaayambhuva manvantara. He married Arundhati aka Oorja. He had 7 sons, led by Chitraketu

In the Vaivaswata manvantara he was reborn as Varuna's son. In this birth he had one hundred sons. Out of these, ninety-nine were killed by Raakshasaas. Vasishta did not lose his temper and focused his energy on raising his one remaining son - Shakti. When even Shakti was killed by Raakshasaas, Vasishta became dejected and decided to give up everything. He started walking towards the forest, followed by Shakti's wife adRushyanti. Suddenly, out of nowhere, Vasishta heard Vedic hymns being uttered. After examining his surroundings he realized that the sounds were coming from his daughter-in-law's womb. It then dawned on him that Shakti's child was a very great soul. He immediately abandoned his plans to commit suicide and decided to take care of his daughter-in-law and the child growing in her womb. His grandson was the great Paraashara muni. Vasishtha returned to his regular lifestyle and in course of time became the Raja-guru of the Sun dynasty advising many great kings like Dasharatha, Raama etc.

Paraashara, the father of Veda vyAsa

The daughter of Pitru devatas was born as the daughter of Uparichari Vasu. Due to a combination of circumstances the baby was actually conceived in a fish, that was captured by the head of fishermen. He brought the child up as his own daughter. She grew up into a fine, beautiful woman, who plied the boats and helped people cross the river. She is known by many names – Vaasavi (daughter of Vasu), Matsya gandhi (born to a fish), kaaLi (dark skinned), Vedavati (the mother of Vedavyaasa).

Paraashara muni came there and was enamored by Matsya gandhi. He realized that it was divine will that he beget a son out of her. When she demurred, he gave her a boon saying that her virginity would be intact even after child birth. The baby born to them was Veda vyAsa, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Since he was dark skinned and born in an island (dveepa), he also became known as Krishna Dwaipaayana (the dark one born on an island).

When the intensity of gyAna on Earth started becoming weak, it was VedavyAsa who re-established it (see section on Gautam for more details). He classified the Vedas, composed Brahmasootras, Mahaabhaarata and the 18 puraaNas to give knowledge a strong foundation. This is Paraashara's gift to humanity.

Bhrugu- the propagator of hari sarvOttamatva

Bhrugu was another maanasa putra of Brahma in Svaayambhuva manvantara. He had 2 sons – Dhaata and Vidhaata. Dhaata's son was Mrukandu and his son was Maarkandeya, the one who warded off Death. Vidhaata's son was Praana; Prana's son was Vedashiras. Shukracharya was the son of Vedashiras.

Bhrugu was reborn in Vaivaswata manvantara as the son of Varuna. In this birth also, Shukraacharya was his son. In another birth, Bhrugu had another son called Chyavana. His son was Ourva (see section on Ourva).

Bhrugu was once sent by the sages to evaluate the merits of Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu to determine who was the greatest amongst them and most eligible to receive their prayers and worship. Bhrugu first went to Brahmaloka to visit his father (Brahma). Brahma was engrossed with Saraswati and did not acknowledge Bhrugu's arrival. Bhrugu became angry and cursed Brahma to be devoid of worship on Earth. He then went to Kailasa to visit Shiva. There also he met with the same treatment; Shiva was in amorous dalliance with Parvati

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and totally oblivious to his surroundings. Bhrugu became angry at being ignored and cursed Shiva to be worshipped in his Linga form. When Bhrugu saw Shiva getting angry he left Kailasa and went to Vaikunta to visit Vishnu. Here again, he found the same treatment; Vishnu was resting on Adi-sesha with Lakshmi pressing his feet. He did not acknowledge Bhrugu's arrival; Bhrugu grew angry at this slight and kicked Vishnu on his chest. Vishnu pretended to wake up; he profusely apologized to Bhrugu for not acknowledging his arrival. Bhrugu was surprised to see Vishnu devoid of anger; he was also very pleased to see the reverence with which he was treated by Vishnu. He came back to Earth and declared Vishnu to be the supreme amongst all gods and totally devoid of defects like anger.

Bhrugu's descendents are called Bhaargavas; the most famous amongst these is Parasuraama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Lakshmi too incarnated as Bhrugu's daughter and was called Bhaargavi.

Ourva, the protector of Sagara maharAja

Once there was a feud between the descendents of Kaartiveerya Arjuna and Bhrugu. The king's warriors started killing womenfolk in Bhrugu's lineage. The women fled to the distant reaches of Himalayas to protect themselves. One woman hid her womb in her thigh. The soldiers came to know of this and approached her to abort the baby. At that instant, the baby burst forth from his mother's thigh, with his eye blazing in anger. His anger totally blinded the soldiers. When they repented their actions and sought his forgiveness, they regained their eyesight. The child was named as Ourva - the one born from Uru (thigh in Sanskrit).

The danger posed by the Kshatriyas was averted, but Ourva's anger was still blazing. As this was causing great harm to humanity, the Pitrus appeared before him and asked him to get rid of his anger. Ourva converted his anger into a female horse and submerged it in the ocean. That is why fires coming from the ocean are called Ourvaanala (fire from ourva) or badabaanala (badaba means female horse in Sanskrit).

Baahuka, the emperor of bharata Varsha, was addicted to gambling and excessive drinking. Even though Bahuka had many wives, he had no children. He also acquired bad friends who led him further away from Dharma and eventually usurped his empire. Bahuka died due to his bad habits. At the time of his death, one of his wives was pregnant. The other wives were jealous of her and gave her poison to kill her along with the child. However, Sage Ourva used his tapaH shakti (spiritual powers) to save the child and mother. The baby was born along with the poison that was administered to kill him. Ourva named him sagara (sa = along with, gara = poison) and trained him to be a great emperor. Sagara was responsible for the creation of oceans and that is why they are called 'saagara'. All of this was possible only due to the dedication and power of Ourva rishi.

The last of the saptarishis of svaayambhuva manvantara is Atharva. His son is Dadheechi atharvaNa or dadayanga atharvana. He became famous for giving his spine to Indra in order to create the Vajraayudha, which was used to kill Vrutraasura. Atharva or his son are not mentioned in the Mangalaashtaka

Having looked at the saptarishis of svaayambhuva manvantara let us look at the sapta rishis of the current (Vaivasvata) manvantara. They are – Kashyapa, Atri, Vasishtha, Vishvaamitra, Goutama, Jamadagni and Bhaaradwaaja. Out of these, Atri and Vasishta are common to both manvantaras.

VishvAmItra – the friend (mitra) of the Universe (Vishva):

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Ourva's son was Rucheeka. He married Satyavati, the only child of Gaadhiraaja, a king in the Chandra vamsha. When Ruchika performed a yagna to get an offspring, Satyavati requested him to help her mother also. Accordingly, Ruchika split the result of his penance into 2 portions – one for his wife and one for his mother-in-law. The one meant for Satyavati was designed to produce a very great sage and the one for his mother-in-law was meant to produce a great warrior. Rucheeka went to the river to perform his rituals. However, Satyavati's mother had the suspicion that the fruit meant for her would be less potent than the one mean for her daughter. She convinced her daughter to believe this theory. Accordingly, they exchanged the fruits and consumed them before Rucheeka's return. When Rucheeka returned to Ashrama he realized (through his yogic powers) what had happened. He told them that they had committed a grave mistake, the consequences of which would be terrible. Mother and daughter were aghast on hearing this and begged him to reverse the effects. However, he expressed his inability to reverse what had happened and offered to delay the effect on his wife by one generation. His wife gave birth to Jamadagni (see section below) and his mother-in-law gave birth to Vishwaamitra.

Vishwaamitra succeeded Gaadhiraaja as the King. He once witnessed the great powers of Vasishta and was fascinated by it. He decided to become a rishi like Vasishta. He gave up his kingdom and became an ascetic. He did severe penance on the banks of four different oceans and overcame many hurdles and distractions to become a raja-rishi and eventually a brahma rishi. He "saw" gAyatri mantra and bestowed it to humanity, thus proving that he was indeed a friend to everyone in the Universe (which is what his name means). He went to Ayodhya and requested the help of Raama and Lakshmana to perform his yagna that was being interrupted by demons. This also benefited humanity in many ways – the killing of demoness taaTaki, the release of ahalya from her curse (see section on Gautama) and the marriage of Sita and Raama (along with the marriages of Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna). Vishwaamitra also played a key role in demonstrating Harishchandra's steadfastness and dedication to truth.

Jamadagni, the father of Parashurama

As explained above, Jamadagni was the son of Rucheeka and Satyavati. He married Renuka devi and had 4 sons including Parashurama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Once Renuka got distracted and let her mind stray from her dharma. As a result, Jamadagni ordered his sons to kill her as a punishment. The first 3 refused and were cursed by Jamadagni for their disobedience. When Jamadagni asked Parashurama, he did not hesitate at all; he chopped off his mother's head with his axe and was awarded a boon by his happy father. He immediately asked for his mother and brothers to be brought back to life.

Jamadagni was killed by Kartaveeryaarjuna in the course of a dispute over a divine cow. Angered by this, Parashurama vowed to rid Earth of all evil Kshatriyas. He went around the world 21 times, destroying all the vile Kshatriyas he encountered. In the end, he gifted all the lands he had acquired by killing the kings to sages and carved out a piece of land for himself from the sea. He later trained Bheeshma, Drona and Karna in the martial arts; in turn, Drona trained all the kings and princes of that land.

Even though Parashurama was born in a brahmin family, he became known for his fearless valor, as predicted by Rucheeka. He has not terminated his incarnation and will be back in the forthcoming manvantara to rid the world of evil forces.

Gautama – the cause for Godavari and Vedavyasa

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Gautama was a great rishi, belonging to the lineage of Angiras. He married Ahalya, the daughter of king Mudgala. Indra was infatuated by Ahalya and took on Gautama's appearance in order to have conjugal relations with Ahalya. When Gautama realized this, he cursed Indra to suffer from a terrible disease and cursed Ahalya to become invisible within a stone.

The common perception is that Indra paid a price for his lust but that is not the whole truth and there is a hidden side to this episode. Through his severe penance Gautama had earned a lot more punya than he was entitled to. The celestials realized that this was upsetting the cosmic balance and decided to rid him of his excessive punya. In shastra it is clearly said that the quickest way to lose punya is to insult or hurt a superior soul. Indra is a much higher soul when compared to Gautama. So, by cursing Indra, Gautama quickly lost all his excess punya. He did not realize that Indra's actions stemmed from his desire to preserve cosmic balance and not by lust.

When Raama visited Gautama ashrama, his feet touched the stone housing Ahalya and she was released from her curse. Raama then requested Gautama to take back Ahalya and live with her. Gautama did so happily. It is a coincidence that Janaka's chief priest overseeing the wedding of Raama and Sita was Shataananda, the son of Gautama and Ahalya! It is said that he was repaying Raama for uniting his parents! Krupaachaarya and Krupi (the wife of Dronaachaarya) all belong to the lineage of Gautama.

There was once a great famine that spread far and wide. However, Sage Gautama's spiritual powers (tapaH shakti) were so great that his ashrama was spared and there was plenty of water and greenery there. Sages and ascetics from far and wide sought refuge there and were welcomed with open arms by Gautama. This famine lasted for 12 years after which there were plenty of rains everywhere and there was no water scarcity. The people who had assembled in Gautama's ashrama sought his permission to go back home. However, Gautama had become attached to them and pressed them to stay with him longer. Having benefited from his hospitality for so many years the ascetics found it very difficult to refuse his offer. So, they resorted to a subterfuge. They used their powers to create a magical cow that was sent to graze on Gautama's fields. When Gautama touched the cow to pull it away from his fields it died. The ascetics accused him of gO-hatya (the heinous sin of killing a cow) and left his ashrama. The distraught Gautama prayed to Lord Shiva to help him. Shiva sent Ganga to revive the dead cow. That river became known as Godaavari (the river that revived the cow). Gautama realized the trick the ascetics that had played on him and became very angry. He cursed all of them to lose their knowledge and magical powers. This led to a situation where spiritual knowledge started decaying all around. The celestials were perturbed by this and approached Brahma for relief. He advised them to pray to Lord Vishnu to incarnate on Earth and revive spiritual knowledge. The Lord agreed and incarnated as Vedavyaasa, the son of Satyavati and Paraashara. He restored lost vedic texts and grouped them into 4 branches – Rig, Yajus, Saama and Atharva. He taught their meaning to his disciples and sent them to the far corners of the land to propagate this knowledge. He then composed Brahma sUtras to capture the essence of all vedas in short aphorisms. He also composed MahabhArata to serve as the foundation of all shastras. He also composed 18 puraaNas to explain and supplement the Vedas. As a result of these actions, spiritual knowledge was fully restored on Earth.

Bharadwaaja:

Bhaaradwaaja was the last of the sapta rishis of this vaivasvata manvantara. He was the son of Mamata and Utathya Rishi. He was performing penance on the banks of Ganga when he saw apsara Ghrutaachi and was enamored by her beauty. The feelings of lust aroused by her made him emit his bodily fluids. He captured and preserved it in a drona (a small container made of metal; called 'donne' in kannada). The child born out of this

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drona was none other than Dronaachaarya,. Drona married Krupi (the sister of Krupaachaarya) and got Ashwatthaama, an incarnation of Shiva, as his son. He learnt martial arts from Lord Parashuraama and became the preceptor of Pandavas and Kauravas

Agastya:

Agastya was the son of pulastya. There are many great events associated with him. There was a great asura called kaalakeya who used to hide in the ocean and trouble devatas and mankind. When the devatas approached Lord Vishnu for relief he told them that kaalakeya would be exposed if somebody drank all the water in the ocean. The devatas approached Agastya for help and he obliged them by drinking the ocean, thereby enabling the devatas to kill kaalakeya.

Vindhyaachala mountain became jealous of Meru mountain and started growing in order to surpass Meru. It became so tall that it started obstructing the sun's movement in the sky. The devatas approached Agastya, who was in North India. He immediately agreed and started travelling towards South India, carrying Ganga in his kamanDala. When he came across Vindhyaachala he ordered the mountain to bend down and give him passage; he also directed the mountain to stay in that position till his return. Once he crossed the mountain, he stayed back in South India and never went North again, thereby forcing Vindhyaachala to remain in the bent position forever. He earned the name Agastya through this act ('aga' = mountain, 'stya' = one who made it immobile). When he came to bhaagamandala to do penance his kamandala slipped from his hand and fell down, spilling Ganga on the ground. Another story says that a crow tipped his kamandala in its effort to drink the ater within the Kamandaala. This stream of water became Kaaveri.

Maandavya

Maandavya was a great rishi. One day, thieves were looting the treasury of the king of the land. The King's guards saw this and started chasing the thieves. The thieves became scared and dumped their loot in Mandavya's ashrama and hid there. The King's guards came to the ashrama and saw Maandavya in deep meditation. When they searched the ashrama they found the loot as well as the thieves. They assumed that Maadnavya was in league with the thieves and was pretending to be in meditation only to avoid punishment. They produced Maandavaya and the thieves before the King. Without enquiring into the background, the king summarily sentenced all of them to be impaled on a spear and put to death. This punishment was carried out and the thieves died. However, Maandavya did not die because of his great tapaH shakti. The guards saw this and took him to the King who also realized that this was a great sage and immediately ordered his release. However, a piece of the spear was buried in his body and could not be removed; from that day on, he was known as Ani-maandavya (Maandavya with spear).

After this incident, Maandavya went directly to Yamaloka and confronted Yama. He said "The king mistook me for a thief and ordered my punishment. I am not angry with him because he is a human and prone to make mistakes. But you are a devata and know the truth. Why did you permit this injustice to me?" Yama replied "O Great sage, when you were a young boy you tortured a butterfly by piercing its body with pins. Your punishment is a result of this sin". This reply angered Maandavya and he said "You know very well that bad acts committed at a young age are not considered as sins, as children do not know the difference between right and wrong. Despite knowing this you allowed the king to punish me. I curse you to be born on earth in a very low caste as a daasi-putra (son of a maid servant)". Yama willingly accepted this curse and took birth as Vidura, the son of Veda Vyasa and a lowly maid servant. Like Gautama, Maandavya had also acquired punya way

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beyond his eligibility. He lost this by cursing Yama, a much superior soul. That is why Yama went through this rigmarole even though he knew that the sins committed by Maandavya as a boy did not count.

Verse 4:

ಮಾಂಧಾತಾ ನಹುಷೋಽಂಬರೀಷಸಗರೌ ರಾಜಾ ಪೃಥುರ್ಹೈಹಯಃ
ಶ್ರೀಮಾನ್ ಧರ್ಮಸುತೋ ನಳೋ ದಶರಥೋ ರಾಮೋ ಯಯಾತಿರ್ಯದುಃ
ಇಕ್ಷ್ವಾಕುಶ್ಚ ವಿಭೀಷಣಶ್ಚ ಭರತಶ್ಚೋತ್ತಾನಪಾದಧ್ರುವೌ
ಇತ್ಯಾದ್ಯಾ ಭುವಿ ಭೂಭುಜಶ್ಚ ಸತತಂ ಕುರ್ವಂತು ನೋ ಮಂಗಲಮ್ ॥ ೪ ॥

मान्धाता नहुषोऽंबरीषसगरौ राजा पृथुर्हैहयः
श्रीमान् धर्मसुतो नळो दशरथो रामो ययातिर्यदुः
इक्ष्वाकुश्च विभीषणश्च भरतश्चोत्तानपादो ध्रुवौ
इत्याद्या भुवि भूभुजश्च सततं कुर्वन्तु नो मङ्गलम् ॥ ४ ॥

mandhaataa nahuShO&MbarIShasagarou raajaa pRuthurhaihayaH
shrImaan dharmasutO naLO dasharathO raamO yayaatiryaduH
ikShvaakushcha vibhIShaNashcha bharatashchOttaanapaadadhruvou
ityaadyaa bhuvi bhUbhujashcha satataM kurvantu nO mangalam || 4 ||

Meaning:

May the following emperors of Earth, always bless us with auspiciousness:

- MaandhAta
- Nahusha
- Ambareesha
- Sagara
- PRuthu
- Hayahaya
- DharmarAja (Yudhishtira)
- NaLa
- Dasharatha
- Raama
- Yayaati
- Yadu
- Ikshvaaku
- VibheeshaNa

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- Bharata
- Uttaanapaada
- Dhruva

Each of these 17 kings was a pious and noble soul and revered as a Raja-rishi. Even merely uttering their names and remembering them with reverence will usher auspiciousness in our lives. Let us review each of them individually and get a basic understanding of their greatness. Out of these, 3 are from Svaayambhuva manvantara (Bharat, Uttaanapaada, Dhruva), one is from Chaakshusha manvantara (Pruthu) and the remaining 13 are from Vaivasvata manvantara.

Bharata:

There are three Bharatas that are famous in religious literature and all three were kings known for their steadfastness towards Dharma. The first is Raama's brother, Bharata, who was known for his love, devotion and loyalty towards Raama. He shunned the comforts of the palace and lived like a hermit in a cottage until the return of Raama. Even today people take his name as an example of a noble and ideal brother. The second is Bharata, the son of Lord Rishabha. His details are explained below. The third Bharata we hear about is the son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala. He was such a great emperor that after his advent this land became known as Bharata Varsha or Bhaarata.

As stated earlier, Syaamabhuva manu was the manu of the first manvantara. He had 2 sons – Priyavrata and Uttaanapaada. Priyavrata had 2 wives. The first was Barhishmati, the daughter of Vishwakarma. They had 10 sons and one daughter. One of the sons was Aagneedhra. Priyavrata had three sons from his second wife – Uttama, Taapasa (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu) and Raivata. All three sons became manus of the manvantaras bearing their name. The liberation of Gajendra, the king of elephants, happened in Taapasa manvantara.

Aagneedhra married Viprachitti, an apsara, and had 9 sons from her. They became the nava varshaadhipatis of Jambu-dveepa. His eldest son was Naabhi. He became the ruler of Bharata Varsha (the Indian subcontinent extending from Kanyakumari to the Himalayas). Naabhi married Meru devi (the daughter of Meru mountain) and obtained Rushabha as his son. Rushabha is venerated in the bhaagavata as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. He is also worshipped by Jains as an aadi teerthankara.

Rushabha had 100 sons with Bharata as the eldest. Rushabha entrusted the empire to Bharata and decided perform penance in the forest. Not wanting to take anything from the kingdom, he discarded all his belongings including his ornaments and even his clothing. He went to the forest naked! Some ignorant people thought he had become mad. Some others observed his actions and started emulating them. This became the starting point for the digambhara (naked) Jain sect. Rishabha came to Kutajaadri forest in Karnataka. He then created a forest fire there and disappeared. Ignorant people, unaware of His divinity, assumed that He had died in the forest fire.

When Bharata was crowned the emperor of Bharata Varsha , 9 of his brothers became rulers of the 9 major kingdoms within Bhaarata. Another nine became very great sages, venerated by all. These were Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalaayana, Aavirhotra, Dramila, Chamasa and Karabhaajana. We read about them in bhaagavata. The remaining 81 brothers accepted braahmana dharma and performed yagnas and homas as prescribed by shastras.

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Bharat ruled over the empire as a just and pious king. When he grew old, he handed over the empire to his sons and went to Pulaha's ashrama for penance. There he came across a baby orphan deer. He started caring for the deer and in the process became excessively attached to it and lost his spiritual moorings. During his final moments he was worried about the deer and its upkeep after his death. As a result, he was reborn as a deer. However, as a result of the penance he had done before, his devotion and knowledge remained intact. He lived in the same ashrama and finally died. He was reborn as Jada Bharata, the son of a priest. All his brothers were well versed in shastras and assisted their father in his priestly duties. Bharata pretended to be dull and ignorant, even though he was much more knowledgeable than his father and his brothers. He did so because he was determined to remain steadfast in his contemplation of the Lord and avoid all attachments. After a while, his family gave up on him and gave him menial tasks only, assuming that he was incapable of performing more involved duties.

King Rahuguna was going in a palanquin towards the ashrama of Dattaatreya when one of the bearers became sick. The other bearers came across Jada Bharata and made him a bearer to replace the one who had fallen sick. As Jada Bharata's steps were not in concert with other bearers, the movement of the palanquin became haphazard causing great discomfort to King Rahuguna. When he found out the reason, he admonished Bharat and asked him to carry the palanquin properly. But when several of his admonishments did not make any difference, he threatened Jada Bharata with severe punishment. His words stirred Jada Bharata out of his reverie and he gave a deeply philosophical reply to the King's threat. The spiritual depth of his words astounded King Rahuguna. He immediately realized the greatness of Jada Bharata and surrendered at his feet. He asked Jada Bharata to become his guru and provide him spiritual guidance. This story is immortalized in the Bhaagavata.

UttaanapAda and Dhruva:

Uttaanapaada was the other son of Syaamabhuva manu. He too had two wives – Suneeti and Suruchi. Dhruva was Suneeti's son and Uttama was Suruchi's son. Uttaanapaada favored Suruchi a lot and neglected Suneeti and Dhruva. One day, when the five-year old Dhruva attempted to sit in his father's lap, he was pushed aside by his step mother. She sarcastically asked Dhruva to pray to Lord Vishnu so that he could be born as Suruchi's son in his next birth in order to sit in his father's lap. Dhruva went crying to his mother who consoled him but was powerless to get him his father's love. Suruchi's words had left an immense effect on Dhruva. He decided to go to the forest and pray to Lord Vishnu. He left the palace despite his mother's pleadings and went to the forest. Sage Narada met him there and gave his upadesha of Vaasudeva dvaadashaakshara mantra ("OM Namo Bhagavate vaasudEvaaya"). Dhruva chanted this mantra with utmost devotion and steadfastness, while performing very rigorous penance. The details of his penance are astounding and one is amazed at how a five-year old child could endure such hardships.

In the first month, he consumed fruits once every three days. In the second month, he ate grass and dried leaves every sixth day. In the third month, he drank just water every ninth day. In the fourth month, he consumed air every 12^{th} day while holding his breath during other times. In the fifth month, he stopped even this and held his breath continually while meditating on the Lord. In the sixth month, Lord Vishnu appeared before him and blessed him. He told Dhruva that he would rule over his father's empire and also rule over a celestial world too. This world would be named Dhruva-loka in his honor.

When Dhruva returned home, he was greeted by a huge retinue consisting of his father, mother, step-mother and step-brother and all prominent courtiers of the Kingdom. In due course he was crowned the emperor of Bharata

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Varsha. He had two wives – one was the daughter of Lord Shimshumaara (a form of Lord Vishnu, in the shape of a scorpion) and the other was the daughter of Vaayu.

Dhruva's story is immortalized in the Bhaagavata. When we talk about great devotees of the Lord, his name is always mentioned.

Pruthu:

One of the descendants of Dhruva was Chakshus. He became the manu of Chaakshusa manvantara. His grand son was Anga; the kingdom built by him was Anga-desha. Anga had a vile son called Vena, whose evil nature was evident even during his childhood. Unable to witness the evil deeds of his son, Anga retired to the forest to perform penance. Vena was crowned King by the sages. His evil nature was now in full bloom. He was arrogant and forced his subjects to worship him as God. Finally, all the sages got fed up with him and got rid of him through their snort (hunkaara). Since he had no children, the sages churned his right shoulder and created a male child. He was named Pruthu and crowned the king. He was a very virtuous king who believed in righteousness. Vena's evil rule had rendered the land barren and devoid of any crops, creating famine throughout the land. Angered by Bhudevi's (mother Earth) indifference to the suffering of his subjects, King Pruthu decided to punish her. Bhudevi took the form of a cow and fled towards the heavens, with Pruthu following in pursuit. When Bhudevi learnt the reason for his anger she advised him to calm down and follow the path of truth and righteousness. When he did so, prosperity and happiness returned back to his land. He reorganized the land into cities and farmlands – one meant for living, and the other for agriculture. He constructed lakes and channels for river waters to flow from one place to another. Since he was the main architect of civilization, Earth was named as Pruthvi (the daughter of Pruthu). That name remains to this day.

Having looked at the Rajarishis of Svaayambhuva and Chaakshusha manvantaras, let us look at the remaining ones, who are all from our manvantara (Vaivasvata).

Nahusha

Vaivasvata is the son of Vivasvaan (the Sun) and the ruler of this manvantara. That is why when we do sankalpa we use the phrase "vaivasvata manvantare". The first child of Vaivasvata manu was a girl named Ila. Budha, the son of Chandra, fell in love with her and married her. Their son was Pururavas, the first king of the Moon dynasty. Pururava's son was Aayu and his son was Nahusha.

Once, due to force of circumstances, Indra had to leave his post. The gods were worried that asuras would attack them as they had no king to protect them. They approached Nahusha and offered him Indra's post, which he accepted. However, after a few days in power, he got drunk with power and started lusting after Indra's wife Shachi. Unable to reject his offer outright, Shachi agreed to his proposal but made it conditional. The condition was that Nahusha should come to her palace on a palanquin borne by the sapta-rishis themselves. When Nahusha ordered the sapta rishis to do this, they had no option but to agree. As they were carrying the palanquin, Sage Agastya engaged Nahusha in debate. His question to Nahusha was "Are the Vedas pramaanaas (reliable references that are true)?" This was a trick question because Nahusha knew that the Vedas were sacrosanct but could not admit that openly. Why? Because the vedas expressly forbade the behavior he was exhibiting – lusting after another man's wife. So, even though he knew the Vedas were sacrosanct, he said they were not. This led to a debate between him and Agastya that Nahusha lost. Angered by his loss, he physically abused Agastya, who immediately cursed him to become a python that preyed on other animals. The remorse

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stricken Nahusha asked for forgiveness and a remedy for the curse. Agastya told him that he would be released from the curse when somebody answered his questions. After this, Nahusha fell from heaven into a dense forest as a python. He continued in his state preying on any living being that came near him. One day Bhima too fell into his clutches. Nahusha asked Bhima several questions which Bhima did not answer even though he knew the answers. Bhima did so because answering questions to save his life would amount to using knowledge for a selfish purpose. He lay in Nahusha's clutches until Yudhisthira came by. Yudhishtira answered all of Nahusha's questions and freed Bhima. In that process Nahusha also regained his former body and went back to heaven after blessing Yudhishtira and other Pandavas.

Ikshvaaku:

After the birth of Ila, Vaivasvata manu did penance and obtained 10 children. The first of these was Ikshvaaku. The solar dynasty started with him. His descendants include many famous kings like Maandhaata, Sagara, Dasharatha, Raama,. He was known for emphasizing the importance of performing pitru kaarya.

Ambareesha:

One of the other sons of Vaivasvata manu was Naabhaaga. His son was Ambareesha.

Ambareesha became the emperor of Bharata Varsha. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and a strict practitioner of Ekadashi fasting. Once sage Durvaasa visited him on dvaadashi. Ambareesha was delighted to see him and immediately invited him for dvaadashi paarane (the meal consumed on dvaadashi after fully fasting on Ekadashi). Durvaasa said that he would join him for the paarane after taking a bath in the river. Ambareesha agreed and waited for the sage to return. However, when a lot of time elapsed and Durvaasa did not return, Ambareesha's priest cautioned him that the auspicious time for paarane was coming to an end very soon. Ambareesha was caught in a dilemma; on the one hand, he did not want to eat without feeding Durvaasa, but on the other hand he did not want to miss dvaadashi paarane which was an important aspect of Ekadashi fasting. Finally, his priest suggested a compromise. He asked Ambareesha to consume teertha in the auspicious time and wait for his guest. Consuming teertha would complete the ritual of paarane without actually consuming food. Ambareesha did so and waited for Durvaasa's arrival. When Durvaasa returned he immediately realized what had happened and became furious that Ambareesha had consumed teertha without waiting for him. He brushed aside Ambareesha's sincere apologies and summoned a demon to kill Ambareesha. Ambareesha prayed to Lord Vishnu with devotion and sought His blessings. Vishnu sent his Sudarshana chakra (disc) to protect Ambareesha. The chakra killed the demon and started chasing Durvaasa. He fled to Brahmaloka to request Brahma to save him from Sudarshana. When Brahma expressed his inability to do so, Durvaasa fled to Kailasa. When even Shiva expressed his inability to save him, he finally fled to VaikunTha. Lord Vishnu also told him that He could not help Durvaasa because He was bound to help His devotee and could not summon his chakra back. He said that Ambareesha was the only person who could help Durvaasa and asked him to seek Ambareesha's pardon. Durvaasa returned to Ambareesha's palace and asked him to forgive him (durvaasa). When Ambareesha prayed to Vishnu, the chakra blessed Ambareesha and went back to Vishnu. Durvaasa was pleased with Ambareesha's sweet nature and blessed him profusely.

On the surface, this incident seems to demonstrate the victory of Ambareesha over the haughty Durvaasa, but that is not the case. This was a charade enacted by Durvaasa and all other gods to demonstrate the devotion of Ambareesha and highlight the greatness of Ekadashi fasting. Durvaasa is a much higher jeeva than Ambareesha and therefore much dearer to Vishnu than Ambareesha.

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Yadu, Yayaati:

Yayaati was the son of Nahusha. He had two wives – Devayaani and Sharmishte. Devayaani had 2 sons – Yadu and Turvashu. The Yadava lineage started with Yadu. Lord Krishna and Balarama were part of this lineage. Sharmishte had three sons – Druhyu, Anu and Puru. The Pourava lineage started with Puru and includes both the Kauravas and Pandavas.

When Yayaati was approaching old age he desired to enjoy the fruits of youth for some more time. So, he asked each of his sons individually to give their youth to him and accept his old age. The first four refused; only the last son, Puru, agreed to the exchange. Yayati enjoyed the fruits of Puru's youth for a long time before realizing the futility of trying to satisfy desire. He concluded that just as it is impossible to put out a fire by pouring ghee on it, it is impossible to end desires by continually satisfying them. He gave Puru his youth back, blessed him profusely and crowned him as the next Emperor. He cursed his other sons and banished them from his life. None of them prospered and they all died in ignominy. The only exception was Yadu, who was perhaps spared because he was to become the genitor of the Yadava dynasty in which Lord Krishna was born.

Haihaya aka Kaartaveeryaarjuna:

Hehaya was a king in the Yadava lineage. One of his descendants was Krutaveerya. His son was Arjuna, also known as Kaartaveeryaarjuna (Krutaveerya's son Arjuna). Since he enhanced the glory of the Hehaya clan he was also known as Haihaya.

Kaartaveeryaarjuna had a thousand arms and was immensely powerful. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Dattaatreya and through His grace became invincible. However, he left the path of virtuousness and became arrogant and evil; he stole Kamadhenu from Jamadgani's ashrama and harassed other sages. When his evil exploits became too much he was slain by Lord Parashurama.

There is a popular belief that Kaartaveeryaarjuna can find lost objects. That is why people who have misplaced something and are looking for it take his name, hoping the object will be found.

MaandhAta:

Yuvanaashva was a king in the Sun dynasty and one of the descendants of Ikshvaaku. As he had no children the prominent sages in his kingdom performed a yagna on his behalf. Using their spiritual powers, they invoked the power of the yagna into a jar of water. Their intent was to give it to the Queen the next morning. However, Yuvanaashva woke up in the night and feeling thirsty drank the sanctified water by mistake. When the sages heard about this the next morning they were aghast and warned the king that their yagna would never go waste and the sanctified water drunk by the king would bless him with a son. It came to pass as they had predicted; in due course of time, when childbirth became imminent, the sages slit open the left side of Yuvanaashva's abdomen without causing pain and delivered the baby boy. When the baby started crying out of hunger the sages were not sure how to feed him as there was no mother. At that juncture, Indra, the king of the devas, appeared before them and offered to feed the baby. He put his finger in the baby's month and said "maandhaata" (meaning "He shall draw sustenance from me"). When the baby started sucking on Indra's finger Nectar flowed from it, thereby feeding the baby. The sages named the baby as Maandhata. He grew up to become the Emperor of a huge empire; it is said that his empire extended to wherever the rays of the sun

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reached. Maandhaata had 50 daughters and one son (Muchukunda). Maandhaata gave all his 50 daughters in marriage to Soubhari rishi.

Muchukunda aided the gods in their battle against raakshaas. When the victorious gods directed him to ask for a boon in return for his services he asked for deep sleep and requested that the person waking him up should be burnt to ashes. He then went into a cave to sleep. When the demon Kaalayavana attacked Mathura, Krishna went into the cave where Muchukunda was sleeping, Kaalayavana chased him and in the dark stumbled across Muchukunda, waking him up. He was burnt to ashes as a result. Krishna revealed himself to Muchukunda and blessed him with salvation.

Sagara:

Baahuka was a prominent king of the Sun dynasty. When enemies conquered his kingdom he went to the forest along with his wives. When he died, the eldest queen wanted to perform 'sati' and die along with him. However, Sage Ourva saw with his divine vision that she was pregnant and convinced her to not commit sati. When Baahuka's other wives heard about this they became very jealous and poisoned the queen. However, due to Sage Ourva's blessings the queen survived and gave birth to a baby boy. Since the child was born with poison, he was called Sagara (sa = along with, gara = poison).

Sagara became a great king. He had two wives – Sumati and Keshini (aka Amba). Sumati had 60,000 sons and Amba had one named Asamanjasaa. When Sagara performed an Ashvamedha yagna (horse sacrifice) Indra stole the sacrificial horse to prevent the yagna from being completed. He hid the horse in the hermitage of Sage Kapila in paataala (the subterranean world beneath the surface of the earth). King Sagara sent his 60,000 sons to look for the horse. When they did not find the horse anywhere on Earth, they decided to search the subterranean world. To reach this world, they started digging and the place filled up with water and became the ocean. Since it was created by Sagara's sons it came to be known as Saagara. The sons reached Kapila maharshi's ashrama and found the horse. They assumed he was the thief and attacked him. When Kapila opened His eyes and looked at them with anger, they were immediately burnt to ashes.

Sagara's other son Asamanjasa was in the forest performing penance. So, his son Amshumanta took up the search. When he reached Kapila maharshi's ashrama he saw the Rishi and the ashes of his uncles. He immediately understood what had transpired and prayed to Lord Kapila with sincere devotion. Kapila was pleased with his devotion and allowed him to take the yagna horse. When Amshumanta enquired about the fate of his uncles Kapila told him that only Ganga could help them get salvation.

Amshumanta returned home with the horse and the sacrifice was completed. He then did penance trying to please Ganga, but did not succeed. After his death, his son Dileepa continued the penance but he too did not succeed. His son Bhageeratha took up the penance and succeeded in pleasing Ganga. However, she cautioned him that the force of her descent from heaven would be too much for Earth to bear and asked him to find a way of reducing the impact. Bhageeratha prayed to Lord Shiva and obtained his grace. Accordingly, Lord Shiva spread his jata (matlock) as a net and caught Ganga in that. He became known as Gangaadhara from that day. As a great devotee of Lord Vishnu, he was happy to have Ganga, the paadodaka (water obtained by washing the feet of a great person) of Vishnu, on his head. When Shiva did not let Ganga leave his matlock, Bhageeratha again did penance to request Shiva to release Ganga. Shiva did so and Ganga started flowing on Earth. She followed Bhageeratha towards Kapila's ashrama. On the way, they passed through Sage Jahnu's ashrama. The ashrama was destroyed by the waters of Ganga. Sage Jahnu was angered by this and drank the entire river as a

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punishment. Bhageeratha begged Jahnu to forgive him and explained all the hardships he had encountered in order to bring Ganga to Earth. Jahnu took pity on him and let Ganga out through his right ear. From that day on, Ganga was also known as Jaahnavi (the daughter of Jahnu). Finally, the waters of Ganga reached Kapila's ashrama and flowed over the ashes of Sagara's sons, thereby ensuring their salvation. Since Bhageeratha was responsible for bringing the divine river to Earth, Ganga was called Bhaageerathi. Bhageeratha became the icon for unfaltering, resolute steadfastness; even to this day, if somebody strives very hard to achieve something extraordinary, his effort is called 'bhageeratha prayatna".

Dasharatha and Raama:

Dasharatha was a king in the Sun dynasty and the ruler of Ayodhya. His story needs no further elaboration as it is well documented in the Raamayana. The only point to note is that Sri Raja Rajeshwara yati includes Raama in the list of kings, even though Raama is an incarnation of Vishnu and infinitely more superior in all aspects than others in this list. The author perhaps wants us to temporarily ignore the divinity of Raama and purely judge him as a mere human being. Even when shorn of divinity, Raama shines and surpasses others in the list. He was an ideal son, an ideal husband, an ideal king, an ideal brother, an ideal friend. He was the gold standard for every relationship and facet of life. That is why is called 'maryaada purushotham' - the definition of an ideal man.

VibheeshaNa:

Vibheeshana is a well-known character in Raamayana. Even though he was the brother of Raavana, Kumbhakarana and Shoorpanaka, he was completely different from them in character. He abandoned his vile brother Raavana and became an ardent devotee of Raama. He was a very pious person who always followed the path of righteousness. He showed that it is possible to transcend the limitations of one's family through steadfast character. The other aspect we learn is that the Lord does not care about one's family, religion or caste, He cares only about the content of your character.

Vibheeshana is considered as one of the Chiranjeevis (immortals). There is a popular shloka recited when preparing children for an oil bath ("AshwattamaabalirvyaasOhanumaanshcha vibheeShaNaH, Krupashcha, Parashuraamashacha, saptaite chiranjeevinaH", meaning that Aswathama, Bali, VedaVyaasa, Hanuman, Vibhishana, Krupacharya, and Parashuram are chiranjeevis). Some people include Maarkandeya also in this list, making him the eight Chiranjeevi.

NaLa :

naLa was another famous king described in the Mahabharata. He was the king of Nishada and was also known as naishaada. The lineage of his ancestors is not clearly documented in any puraaNa.

NaLa was known for his skill with horses and his cooking ability. Even today the phrase "naLa pAka" is used to describe good cooking. It is said that he could count the number of leaves in a tree while driving a chariot. He also possessed the ability of lighting a lamp just by reciting agni sookta. Princess Damayanti of Vidarbha chose him in a swayamvara, even though many celestials were there in the assemblage. Kali, the demon, decided to ruin his life in order to punish Damayanti for discarding celestials. However, Nala was such a noble soul that Kali could not find any weakness him in for 12 years. However, Nala entered his house one day without washing his feet. This gave Kali the opportunity to enter his mind and lead him down the path of ruin as a

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gambler. As a result, both Nala and Damayanti suffered a lot of hardships, but never abandoned the path of righteousness. Finally, Nala regained his wealth, kingdom and wife and lived happily. His life cautions us against the evils of gambling and the types of things that invite Kali into our body and mind. It also teaches that those who follow the path of righteousness always succeed in the end.

Once Paarvati, Shachi (Indra's wife), Shyaamala (Yama's wife) and Usha (Ashwini devatas wife) incurred the wrath of Brahma through some infraction. He cursed them to be born on Earth three times. They approached Bhaarati devi, the wife of Vaayu, to incarnate along with them and protect them. Accordingly, all of them were born on Earth, sharing one body and were known as Panch-kanyas. During Treta yuga (Raamayana time) they incarnated as Viprakanya. Their second birth was as Nala's daughter Indrasena, also called as Naalaayani. Their final birth was in Dvapara yuga (Mahabharata time) as Draupadi.

Dharmaraaja:

Kuru was one of the famous kings in the Moon dynasty. Both the Kauravas and Paandavas are his descendants. The famous Kurukshetra, where the war between Paandavas and Kauravas took place, is his creation. This has been immortalized in the Gita which begins with "dharmakshEtre kurukshetre samavetaa …".

Yudhishtira or Dharmaraaja was the eldest of the Paandavas. The story of the Kauravas and Paandavas has been well documented in Mahaabhaarata and needs no further elaboration.

Sri Raja Rajeshwara yathi addresses Yudhishtira as 'ShrImaan Dharmasuta". This is a reference to the fact that Yudhishtira was the son of Yama dharmaraaja. He is addressed with the honorific "ShrImaan" because he spent his entire life stick to the path of Truth and Righteousness.

Verse 5:

ಶ್ರೀಮೇರುರ್ಹಿಮವಾಂಶ್ಚ ಮಂದರಗಿರಿಃ ಕೈಲಾಸಶೈಲಸ್ತಥಾ
ಮಾಹೇಂದ್ರೋ ಮಲಯಶ್ಚ ವಿಂಧ್ಯನಿಷದೌ ಸಿಂಹಸ್ತಥಾ ರೈವತಃ
ಸಹ್ಯಾದ್ರಿರ್ವರಗಂಧಮಾದನಗಿರಿರ್ಮೈನಾಕಗೋಮಂತಕೌ
ಇತ್ಯಾದ್ಯಾ ಭುವಿ ಭೂಧರಾಶ್ಚ ಸತತಂ ಕುರ್ವಂತು ನೋ ಮಂಗಲಮ್ ॥ ೫ ॥

श्रीमेरुर्हिमवांश्च मन्दरगिरिः कैलासशैलस्तथा
माहेन्द्रो मलयश्च विन्ध्यनिषधौ सिंहस्तथा रैवतः
सह्याद्रिर्वरगन्धमादनगिरिर्मैनाकगोमंतकौ
इत्याद्या भुवि भूधराश्च सततं कुर्वन्तु नो मङ्गलम् ॥ ५ ॥

shrImErurhimavaaMshcha mandaragiriH kailaasashailastathaa

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maahEndrO malayashcha vindhyaniShadou siMhastathaa raivataH
sahyaadrirvaragandhamaadanagirirmainaakagOmantakou
ityaadyaa bhuvi bhUdharaashcha satataM kurvantu nO mangalam || 5 ||

Meaning:

May the following mountains and hills on Earth, always bless us with auspiciousness:

- Meru
- Himavaan (Himalaya)
- Mandara
- Kailaasa
- Maahendra
- Malaya
- Vindhya
- Nishada
- Simha
- Raivata
- Sahyaadri
- Gandhamaadana
- Mainaaka
- Gomantaka

The Mangalaashtaka mentions 14 mountains / large hills. There are two points to note. Each mountain or hill has an abhimaani devata (patron deity) associated with it. This verse is focused on the abhimaani devata and not on the physical structure. This is because the structure is inanimate and cannot bless or harm us; it is the abhimaani devata who has the power to do this. The second point to note is that not all the mountains and hills mentioned in this verse are visible to human eyes; several of them are visible only to gyanis and celestials. Some scholars believe that six of mountains mentioned here – Meru, Himavaan, Mandhara, Kailaasa, Nishada and Gandhamaadana – are all different peaks of Himalaya. This is similar to Ganga having several names like Alakananda, Mandaakini, Nandaakini and Bhaageerathi. Incidentally, mountains are home to many varieties of plants, vegetations and animals. They also have many types of minerals in them.

Meru:

This mountain is described in many puraaNas and spiritual works. It is a mystical mountain not visible to humans. It is made up of gold. That is why it is also known as Sri Meru or Sumeru. According to puraaNas, it is in the northern tip of Jamboo dveepa. It is so tall that even the sun goes around it and not over it. All the planets are said to rotate around this super mountain.

It is said to be the abode of celestials. Chatumukha's house is situated in a portion of Meru called Vyjayanta. The ashramas of the saptarishis and that of Vedavyaasa are all said to be in Meru. The Anantaasana abode of Lord Vishnu is also here. All the rishis, gandharvas, Naarada, Tumburu and other sages assemble in the Meru during holy days. Shukraachaarya, the preceptor of daityas, also resides here. Shiva and Paarvati sport in the

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park called Karnikaara vana. All of these are visible only to gyaanis and celestials. Ganga descended to Earth from one of its peaks.

The abhimaani devata of this mountain (meru deva) is a courtier in Kubera's court. His daughter, Meru devi, married Naabhi and gave birth to Lord Rushabha. Meru is known for its peaks. The Lord has his vibhooti roopa (special presence) in its peaks. That is why Krishna says in the Gita "mEruH shikhariNaamaham" (I am Meru amongst mountains having peaks). It is said to be full of caves.

Himavaan (Himalaya):

This mountain needs no elaboration because even school going children know that it is the northern tip of India. But not many know that the abhimaani devata for this mountain is Parvata-raaja. He too is a courtier in Kubera's court. He is the father of Mainaaka and Parvati. This mountain has many famous peaks like Everest, Kailas, Kanchana junga etc. The Pandavas were born here, in a location called PandukEshavar. Lord Veda Vyaasa has another ashrama here, as does Naarada. Ganga and Yamuna take their birth in this mountain. This is where Lord Krishna pretended to do tapas towards Shiva in order to obtain a son (Pradyumna). Nahusha, in the form of a Python, snagged Bhima in a forest on this mountain. This is also the abode of Nara-Naaraayana rishis. Famous shrines like Badari, Kedaar, Maanasa sarovar are all in this mountain.

Mandhara:

This is a mystical mountain not visible to ordinary beings; however, some scholars consider it to be a a peak of Himalaya that is not easily accessible. It is said to be shaped like a Top. When the devatas and asuras decided to churn the ocean, they used this mountain as the churning instrument (Kadagolu). It is next to Kailas. It is said to be the home of Yakshas and Rakshasas. Its abhimaani devata is also a courtier in Kubera's court.

Kailaasa:

This peak is well known and documented in spiritual as well as non spiritual works. However, they say that only a portion of this peak is visible to humans. It is considered to be the abode of Lord Shiva and said to be shining as bright as silver. It is said that Bhageeratha performed his penance for Shiva in this mountain. The Ashrama of Veda-Vyaasa is close by. In Madhva Vijaya it is said that Acharya Madhva visited Veda-Vyaasa in this ashrama. The pond seen by Bhima when he went to pick up the Sougandhika flower is close by. Many Yakshas, Raakshasaas, Gandharvas and Apsaras reside here. The abhimaani devata for this mountain is also a courtier in Kubera's court.

Maahendra:

This hill is in the northern tip part of the Eastern ghats and is located in Orissa. It is mentioned in Mahabharata, Raamayana and Puraanas. Lord Parashuraama is said to reside in this hill even to this day. It is on this hill that Arjuna did his tapas towards Shiva in order to obtain Paashupataastra and met Shiva in the form of a hunter. Incidentally, there is another hill with the same name in Kerala.

Malaya:

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This is a part of the Western ghats, located in Kerala. The terms ‘malayaala, ‘malabaar’ all originated from this term. It is said to be full of sandalwood trees. One of the names for sandalwood in Sanskrit is Malayaja (born in Malaya). It is said that Hanumanta and other apes visited this hill when looking for Sita. The abhimaani devata for this mountain is also a courtier in Kubera’s court.

Vindhya:

It is in the central part of India, dividing India into North and South India. It has the sannidhaana (special presence) of Durga. That is why one of the names of Durga is Vindhyavaasini. Some scholars say that in ancient times, the land south of Vindhyas was full of forests, with little to no human presence; all of civilization was to the North. This gradually changed with time and with the advent of the three Acharyas (Shankara, Raamanuja and Madhva), South India acquired special spiritual and religious status.

As stated earlier (while describing Agastya), when this mountain started growing taller in order to compete with Meru, Agastya tricked it into stooping low (in order to allow him passage) and staying in that position for eternity. The abhimaani devata for this mountain is also a courtier in Kubera’s court.

Nishada, Simha, Raivata, Sahyaadri, Gandhamaadana, Mainaaka, Gomantaka:

According to scholars, Nishada mountain is to the West of Gandhamaadana mountain and to the North of kabool river. The modern name for this is Hindu-kush mountain. Nishada kingdom, ruled by Nala, was at the foot of this mountain.

Simha refers to Simhachala. It is near Vishakapatnam (aka Vizag). A famous Narasimha temple is located here. The mountain derives its name from this deity. There is also mention in some puraaNas of a simhaapura kingdom in North India, that was full of hills and mountains. It is possible that those mountains had the name of Simhaachala.

Raivata is in Gujarat, near Junaagad. The modern name is “Girnaar”. It was the favorite sporting ground of Yadavas. Several puraaNas mention Krishna’s visits to this mountain.

Sahyaadri refers to the portion of Western ghats that is in Karnataka (the portion in Kerala is called Malayaachala). It is located near Shimoga, Chikkamagalur and the coastal districts. It is said that Hanumanta and other apes visited this mountain while searching for Sita. Some of the famous landmarks associated with this are Aagumbe (waterfalls), Chaarmaadi ghat, kutajaadri, kumaaraadri and kuduremukh (known for mining). Scientists believe this mountain abounds with many rare flora and fauna.

Gandhamaadana is said to be a part of the Himalayas. It is to the North of Himachal and closer to Badari. This is the mountain that Hanuman carried to the battlefield to revive Lakshmana. When Bheema was a baby he fell to the ground from his mother’s lap. Nothing happened to him but the rock on which he fell developed multiple fractures, earning it the name “shata shringa”. All of that happened in this mountain. It is a storehouse of rare plants and herbs with miraculous medicinal properties. Nara-naaraayana have an ashrama here. It is said to be the home of many Yakshas. Pandavas were born here and also spent some time here during their 12 years of vanavaasa (exile); the famous meeting between Hanuman and Bheema, graphically described in the Vaayu stuti, is said to have occurred here. There is a valley with exquisite and rare flowers. This was visited by Bheema

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when he came looking Sougandhika flower. The abhimaani devata for this mountain is also a courtier in Kubera's court.

The abhimaani devata for Mainaaka hill is the brother of Paarvati and the son of Parvata raaja. There was a time when mountains had wings and would move about at will, causing a lot of havoc to humans and animals. To stop this, Indra cut off their wings with his vajraayudha (thunderbolt). At the time, Vaayu devaru hid Mainaka within the ocean, thereby saving his wings. When Hanuman jumped from Mahendra parvata to Lanka, Mainaka came from the bottom of the ocean to provide him rest. This was his way of showing gratitude to Vaayu. However, Hanuman did not accept his offer; he affectionately embraced Mainaka and continued on his way. This incident is described in Sundara kanda nirnaya of MBTN. Some people say that this is nothing but Shivalik hills at the foot of the Himalayas

Gomanta or gomaantaka parvata is part of the western ghats and is found in Goa. When Jaraasandha attacked Mathura, Krishna and Balarama came to this mountain to draw him away from Mathura. When Jaraasandha ordered the entire mountain to be burnt down in order to kill Krishna and Balarama, they jumped from the top of the mountain to the ground. The force of their jump cracked open Earth's shell, forcing water to gush forth and put out the fire lit by Jaraasandha.

In summary, Sri Raja Rajeshwara Yati has described 14 mountains in this mangalaashtaka . Scientists and biologists also ask us to respect these mountains and hills for the sake of the flora and fauna in them, whereas religious works ask us to respect them for the sake of their abhimaani devatas.

Verse 6:

ಗಂಗಾಸಿಂಧುಸರಸ್ವತೀ ಚ ಯಮುನಾ ಗೋದಾವರೀ ನರ್ಮದಾ
ಕೃಷ್ಣಾ ಭೀಮರಥೀ ಚ ಫಲ್ಗುಸರಯೂಃ ಶ್ರೀಗಂಡಕೀ ಗೋಮತೀ
ಕಾವೇರೀಕಪಿಲಾಪ್ರಯಾಗಕಿಟಿಜಾನೇತ್ರಾವತೀತ್ಯಾದಯೋ
ನದ್ಯಃ ಶ್ರೀಹರಿಪಾದಪಂಕಜಭವಾಃ ಕುರ್ವಂತು ನೋ ಮಂಗಲಮ್ ॥ ೬ ॥

गङ्गा सिन्धुसरस्वती च यमुना गोदावरी नर्मदा
कृष्णा भीमरथी च फल्गुसरयूः श्रीगण्डकी गोमती
कावेरीकपिलाप्रयागकिटिजानेत्रावतीत्यादयो
नद्यः श्रीहरिपादपङ्कजभवाः कुर्वन्तु नो मङ्गलम् ॥ ६ ॥

gangaasindhusaraswatI cha yamunaa gOdaavarI narmadaa
kRuShNaa bhImarathI cha phalgusarayUH shrIganDakI gOmatI
KaaverikapilaaprayaagakiTijaanEtraavatItyaadayO
nadyaH shrIharipaadapaMkajabhavaaH kurvantu nO mangalam || 6 ||

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Meaning:

May the following holy rivers, born from the Lotus feet of Sri Hari, always bless us with auspiciousness:

- Ganga
- Sindhu
- Saraswathi
- Yamuna
- Godaavari
- Narmada
- Krishna
- Bheemarathi
- Phalgu
- Sarayu
- Gandaki
- Gomati
- Kaaveri
- Kapila
- Kitija
- Netraavati

Rivers have always been considered to be holy and a means for us to wash away our sins. Ganga is the holiest of all rivers and directly born from the Lord's feet. However, Sri Raja Rajeshwara Yati goes one step further and say that we should consider all rivers to be born from the Lotus feet of the Lord.

Remembering rivers with gratitude and reverence is a long-standing religious tradition in India. Even an atheist accepts their importance because they are a major source of water for humanity; we cannot survive without them. In days past, not much attention was paid towards maintaining the cleanliness of rivers and people used to dump their waste material into rivers without a second thought, thereby making them filthy and harming the lives of fish and people depending on them. This attitude has changed over time and people now understand the importance of maintaining their cleanliness and purity. There are specific statutory bodies set up specifically for this purpose. There is growing awareness that rivers belong to all of mankind and it is our solemn duty to maintain their purity and sanctity for generations to come.

Ganga:

Ganga reigns supreme amongst all rivers. According to shastra, it took its genesis from the feet of Lord Trivikrama. Physically, the river originates from Gangotri glacier located at a height of 12,770 feet above sea level in western Himalayas that is in Uttarakhand state. It flows from the Himalayas to Hrishikesh, Hardwar and Kashi before it finally joins the Bay of Bengal near Calcutta. It flows for 2510 Km and is the longest Indian river. It has many tributaries like Alakananda, Mandaakini, Bhaagirathi etc. It is associated with several prayaagas in its journey (the word "prayaag' means the confluence of two or more rivers). The most well known of these are: Vishnuprayag (confluence of Alakananda and Dhaula ganga), Nanda prayag (Alakananda,

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Nandakini), Karna prayaga (Alakananda, Pindaar), Rudra Prayag (Alakananda, Mandakini), Deva prayag (Alakananda, Bhaageerathi). After deva-prayag the river is known as Ganga. The final Prayag is in Prayagraj (aka Allahabad) where Ganga and Yamuna are said to meet the mystical Saraswati (which flows underground and is not visible). This spot is revered as Triveni Sangam.

The river flows almost 200 KM in the Himalayas before reaching the plains of Haridwaar. That is why Haridwaar is also known as Gangaadwaar. As it moves further East, many rivers join it. Some of these ae Gomati, Tamasa, Sarayoo, GanDaki, koushaki, ShONa. It sustains many cities on its banks like Kanpur, Kanoj, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Ghazipur, Bhaagalpur, Mirzapur etc. In Bengal it is called Hoogly, in Bangladesh it is called Padma river. It finally joins with portions of Brahmaputra before reaching the Bay of Bengal.

The above describe Ganga's journey on Earth. But shastras call her a Tripatha gamini - one who traverses the three worlds – Swarga (heaven), Bhoomi (earth) and Paataala (the nether world). She was originally a divine river flowing only in Swarga. But Bhageeratha performed penance to bring her down to Earth. Her force was too much for Earth to bear and so Bhageeratha prayed to Shiva to slow her down. Shiva caught Ganga in his mattlock (jate) and gentle released her to the ground. While following Bhageeratha she entered the hermitage of Sage Jahnu and destroyed its contents. Angered by this, Jahnu swallowed her completely. Bhageeratha entreated with Jahnu to release Ganga, which he did through his right ear. From then on, Ganga was also known as Jaahnavi (the daughter of Sage Jahnu).

According to shastra, Ganga is the wife of Varuna, who is the abhimaani devata for the oceans and water in general. As narrated in the Mahabharata, she married Shantanu (an incarnation of Varuna) and gave birth to 8 children out of which only the last one (Bhishma) survived. These 8 were the incarnation of the 8 Vasus who had been cursed by Vasishta for stealing his cow Nandini.

Ganga played a major role in the birth of Subramanya (aka Kumara). After a union with Parvati, Shiva discharged his bodily fluid into Agni. Agni was unable to bear the heat of this fluid and diverted it into Ganga. The child was born on the banks of Ganga, in a meadow that was full of Sharavana plants. The child was nurtured by 6 celestial damsels who were the abhimaani devatas of Kruthika star. The baby took on six faces and drank the milk of all 6 damsels. This baby was given many names – Kumara (son of Shiva, Parvathi), Gaangeya (born on the banks of Ganga), Kaarthikeya (nurtured by the damsels of Kruthika), Shanmuga (six faces), Sharavanabhava (born amongst the sharavana plan) and so on. In a week, this child grew to become the leader of the Devata army. He killed Taarakaasura in the battle between devatas and asuras.

The religious significance of Ganga is captured in all religious works like Puraanas, Itihasas (Mahabharata and Raamayana) and even the vedas. Devout people revere Ganga and invoke her presence everywhere - in the water they collect to perform pooja, in the water they drink and in the water they bathe. In fact, no religious action is performed without invoking Ganga.

In addition to the above religious aspects, Ganga is also considered as the life line of North India as millions of people depend on it for their existence and livelihood.

Sindhu (aka Indus):

It is one of the rivers highly regarded by the vedas. It is customary to invoke the presence of Sindhu in the water collected to perform pooja and also during all religious ceremonies.

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It originates in Kailaasa Maanasa sarovar, which is in Tibet, under Chinese control. It flows through Ladakh province of Jammu and Kashmir state, Baltistaan and Gilgit before entering Pakistan. It flows through the Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan before entering the Arabian Sea in Karachi. It is the longest river in the Indian sub-continent and has a length of 3180 Kms. It merges with several rivers on the way. The most prominent are Kabul river (vedic name Kubhaa) and the 5 rivers of Punjab – Jhelum (vedic name Vitasta), Chenab (Asiknee), Raavi (ParuShNi), Sutlej (Shatadru) and Beas (Vipaashaa). This river is also called Sapta-sindhu because it merges with 6 rivers.

This river is considered to be a male river ('nada') like the Brahmputra. There are two reasons for this. The first is its vast spread and length, giving it a masculine quality. The second reason is that its abhimaani devata is a male, unlike most other rivers where the abhimaani devata is a female.

According to the Mahabharata, this river flowed through the kingdom of Saindhava (aka Jayadratha), who was killed by Arjuna during the Kurusketra war.

Persians called this river as Hindus (as they usually change 'S' to 'H'); this eventually became Indus. This land became known as Hindu desha or Hindustan (the land where Sindhu or Hindu flows). Greeks called this land as Indus or Indoi, which eventually became India.

Sarasvati

This is an enigmatic river as there is no unanimity about its physical presence. Some people call it Gupta-gamini (one who moves invisibly) because that is how it is described in religious literature and more so in the Saama veda and Shukla Yajurveda. Others point to an existing river called Sarsuti. One school of thought calls the Gaggar river as saraswati. This river originates in Shivalik hills of Himachal Pradesh and traverses through Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan; it is visible only during the rainy season. According to the Puraanas, Brahma's wife Saraswati incarnated as a river and flowed from Brahma's Lake in the heavens to the Himalayas and eventually joined Ganga and Yamuna in Prayagraj. This river is extolled in the vedas and has a lot of religious sanctity. We invoke this river while collecting water to perform pooja.

Yamuna:

This river originates in Yamunotri which is at a height of 10,613 feet above sea level and located to the north of Haridwar and close to Mussorie, in the mountain range of Bundar Poonch. This river acts as the boundary between Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. It travels a distance of 1376 Kms before joining Ganga at Prayagraj (Allahabad).

There is another hill next to Bundar Poonch. It is called KaLindagiri. A small river originates in this hill. It is called KaaLindi. This eventually joins the Yamuna. That is why Yamuna is also called KaaLindi.

The abhimaani devata for Yamuna river is Yamuna (aka Yami), the daughter of Surya and the sister of Yama. Surya had 9 children – Yama, Shani, Vaivasvata manu, Soorya saavarNi manu, Tapti, Yamuna, KaaLindi and Ashwini twins. The abhimaani devata for KaaLindi river is KaaLindi. She is one of the Shan-mahishis of Krishna and occupies the 6th Kakshe in taaratamya (see Appendx 1). She is higher than Parvati and lower than Shiva.

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Yamuna is associated with Lord Krishna as most of the incidents linked with Him happened on its banks. When Krishna was born, he asked Vasudeva to take him to Gokula. Yamuna was flowing in full spate then. However, when Vasudeva reached its banks it river parted into two, creating a passage for him. All the exploits of Krishna including raasa leela and subduing of Kalinga happened on the banks of Yamuna. When Akrura was bringing Krishna and Balarama from Vrindavan to Mathura, he performed his evening pooja on the banks of Yamuna. When he entered the river he saw the moola roopa (main form) of Krishna as Anantha Padmanabha. That is why when performing Anantha Chaturdashi vrata, it is necessary to perform Yamuna pooja before the main pooja of Anantha Padmanabha. We invoke this river while collecting water to perform pooja.

Godaavari:

This river originates in Brahmagiri, which is part of the Western Ghats located near Triambakeshwar in Nasik. It enters Andhra Pradesh and finally reaches the Bay of Bengal in Rajamahendri. Its total length is 1465 km.

As stated before (while describing the greatness of Gautama) this river is Ganga in another form. Sage Gautama obtained her from Lord Shiva in order to revive the cow that he was accused of killing. We invoke this river while collecting water to perform pooja

Narmada:

This originates in Amarakantaka hills of Madhya Pradesh and flows through Maharashtra and Bharuch province of Gujarat before entering the Arabian sea. Its total length is 1312 kms. Its width in Bharuch is 20kms. It is one of the few rivers flowing towards the west. It is also known as Reva nandi. Shiva lingas are found in this river, just as saligramas are found in the Gandaki river. There is a popular belief that invoking Narmada's name and remembering her with reverence can remove the fear caused by snakes. We invoke this river while collecting water to perform pooja.

Krishna:

Krishna originates in the Sahyadri range in Maharashtra. It is the fourth-biggest Indian river in terms of water inflows and river basin area, after the Ganga, Godavari and Brahmaputra. It is also one of the longest and has a length of 1,400 km (870 mi). It flows through Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telengana, Andhra Pradesh and reaches the Bay of Bengal after going through Mahendra hills. In the puraaNas it is also referred to as Krishnaveni or Krishnavena.

Bhimarathi:

Bhimarathi (aka Bhima river) originates in the Bheema Shankara hills, in the Sahyadri range in Maharashtra. It also flows through Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telengana and Andhra Pradesh. Since it flows close to Pandharapur it is very dear to devotees of Panduranga Vittala. This section of the river (in Pandharpur) is also called Chandrabhaaga (as it resembles the shape of the moon). After flowing for 861 ksm it merges into the Krishna along the border between Karnataka and Telangana about 24 km north of Raichur in a town called “Krishna”.

Phalgu:

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The Phalgu (Falgu) originates in Jharkand. It flows past Gaya and Buddha gaya in the state of Bihar. It is a sacred river and flows close to the Vishnupaad temple and several other minor shrines in that area. It is also called as "Niranjana" (blemishless). It is subject to high floods during the monsoons but in other seasons dwindles to a stream wandering through a wide expanse of sand. It eventually joins the Ganga.

Sarayu:

It is a holy river mentioned in the Vedas and the Raamayana. It originates in the maapchaachungo glacier near Manasa sarovar in Tibet,at a height of 13,000 feet. It flows South towards Nepal and is called karNaaLi. It flows for 507 KM through Nepal before entering India. It goes by many names in India – Sarayu (the vedic name), Phagwaara, Ghaagraa, gOgraa, khaakra etc. It flows through Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh before joining the Ganga at dOriganj near chaapraa nagar in Bihar and flowing to the Bay of Bengal. Its total length is 1080 kms. It flows close to Ayodhya and is associated with Lord Raama. On Ram Navami thousands of people take a dip in the Sarayu River at Ayodhya.

Gandaki;

It originates at the Nhubine Himal Glacier in the Mustaang region of Nepal near the Tibet border at a height of 12,759 feet. It then flows South-west with the name of Mustaang khOla or kaali ganDaki. It flows through a steep gorge known as the Kali Gandaki Gorge, or Andha Galchi, between the mountains Dhaulagiri (elevation 26,795 ft) to the west and Annapurna (elevation 26,545 ft) to the east. This gorge is the world's deepest (based on the difference between the river height and the heights of the highest peaks on either side). It meets another tributary called trishooli at Devi Ghat. It then flows southwest and is called Gandak / Gandaki or Naaraayani. Since it has 7 tributaries it is also called as Sapta Gandaki. It then enters India at the Indo–Nepal border at Triveni where it meets with rivers Pachnad and Sonha descending from Nepal. It flows southeast 300 kilometres across the Gangetic plain of Bihar through West Champaran, Gopalganj, Saran and Muzaffarpur districts. It joins the Ganges near Patna just downstream of Hajipur at Sonpur (also known as Harihar Kshetra). Its total length before joining Ganga is 630 km.

It derives its importance from the fact that it abounds in Saaligramas, which are worshipped as having the special sannidhaana (presence) of the Lord.

Gomati:

The Gomati/Gomti originates from Gomat Taal (formally known as Fulhaar jheel) near Madho Tanda, Pilibhit in Uttarkhand. close to the famous Naimishaaranya which is closely associated with puraaNas and Mahaabhaarata. It flows for 960 Kms through Uttar Pradesh and meets the Ganges near Saidpur. It flows past several prominent towns like Lucknow, Lakhimpur Kheri, Sultanpur Kerakat and Jaunpur.

Kaaveri:

It is a major river in South India. It originates in in a small pond called Brahmagiri in tala Kaaveri which is in the Sahyaadri hills. It flows for 765 Km though Karnataka and Tamilnadu before reaching the Bay of Bengal near Tanjore. It has many tributaries that contribute to the volume and size of the final river. The main ones are Shimshaa, Hemaavati, Arkaavati, HonnuhoLe, Lakshmana teertha, Kabini (aka Kapila), Bhavaani, LOkapaavani, Amaraavati etc. Another rivulet called Kannike that originates in Brahmagiri also joins kaaveri.

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It descends from the hills and enters the plains at Kushaala nagara. It joins the Kabini in TirumakooDalu, in T Narasipur and in the process creates two islands – Srirangapatna and Shivanasamudra. The famous gagana chukki and bhara chukki falls are located in Shivasamudra, where the river falls 320 ft.

In addition to providing millions of farmers with their livelihood it is also the source of drinking water for several major cities and has several dams, supporting irrigation and power generation.

There are two popular beliefs about its origin. One is that Sage Agastya brought Ganga in his Kamandalu (small vessel carried by ascetics) when he came from North India to the South. One day when he was in deep meditation a crow tried to drink the water in his Kamandalu and in the process spilled it on the ground. The potency of Ganga was such that this small spill became a large river called Kaaveri. The other story is that Agastya's wife Lopamudra saw that people in South India were suffering due to paucity of water. She used her tapaH-shakti (mystic powers) and became a river. Both stories underscore the divine origins of this river and highlight its sanctity as a holy river.

Another notable fact is that there are 3 shrines dedicated to Lord Ranganatha at 3 different places on the banks of this river - Shimsha (Karnataka), Srirangapatna (Karnataka) and Srirangam (Tamilnadu). So, in a manner of speaking, this river is dear to Lord Ranganatha and is triply blessed by Him.

Kapila:

It is also known as Kabini, It originates in Kerala near Wayanad and flows into Karnataka . It joins Kaaveri at Tirumalakoodalu (T Narsipur). The famous shrine dedicated to Lord Nanjunda Swamy (aka SrikanTha) is on the banks of this river in Nanjanagud, Karnataka. It flows for a total distance of 230 kms.

Prayaga (aka Allahabad aka Prayagaraj):

This is the spot where three holy rivers – Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswathi meet. This spot is also known as triveni sangam – the meeting spot of three rivers. The name is appropriate for another reason too. In Sanskrit, "VeNi" also means braid (jade in kannada). The braid on a woman's head has 3 major strands, out of which the central one is usually not visible. The three rivers are like three braids on Mother Earth's head. Sarasawathi is the central braid that is invisible, whereas Ganga and Yamuna are the two visible braids. One of the popular rituals performed here is "Veni samhaara" wherein married women offer a small part of their hair to God as a token for blessing them with a happy married life. Another popular ritual is performing homage to dead ancestors (aka shraadha or pitru kaarya)

Kitija:

Kiti in Sanskrit means Boar (aka 'Varaaha'). So Kitija means "born from Varaha". Three rivers meet this description. First is River Tunga that originates in Varaha hills. The second is Netravati that was born from Varaha's tears of happiness. The third is a river called Vaaraahi ; this river originates in Shimoga and flows in Udupi district. However, most scholars opine that kitija should be interpreted as Tunga because Netravati is mentioned separately and Vaaraahi is not a big river.

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Tunga originates in Varaha hills, a section of the Western ghats, in a place known as Gangaa moola; this is between KaarkaLa and Shringeri in Karnataka. It traverses through ChikkamagaLooru and Shimoga districts. After flowing for 147 kms it meets Bhadra at Koodli and gets the name of Tungabhadra. It then flows into Andhra Pradesh. The famous shrine of Raghavendra swamy at Mantralaya is on the banks of this river. The length of Tungabhadra is 531 Kms. It finally joins Krishna river in Andhra.

Tunga water is considered to be the sweetest of all rivers in the world and there is a saying "tunga paana, ganga snaana" (One should drink Tunga water and bathe in the Ganga).

Netraavati:

Netravati originates in the western ghats near Kudremukh in Chikkamagaluru district. It flows through the famous pilgrimage place Dharmasthala and is dear to devotees of Lord Manjunaatha. It flows for 103 km before merging with the Kumaradhara River at Uppinangadi and flows near Bantwal town before flowing to the Arabian Sea, south of Mangalore city.

Verse 7:

ವೇದಾಶ್ಚೋಪನಿಷದ್ಗಣಾಶ್ಚ ವಿವಿಧಾಃ ಸಾಙಿಗಾಃ ಪುರಾಣಾನ್ವಿತಾ
ವೇದಾಙಿತಾ ಅಪಿ ಮಙಿತ್ರತಙಿತ್ರಸಹಿತಾಸ್ತರ್ಕಾಃ ಸ್ಮೃತೀನಾಙಿ ಗಣಾಃ
ಕಾವ್ಯಾಲಙಿಕೃತಿನೀತಿನಾಟಕಙಿಯುತಾಃ ಶಬ್ದಾಶ್ಚ ನಾನಾವಿಧಾಃ
ಶ್ರೀವಿಷ್ಣೋರ್ಗುಣನಾಮಕೀರ್ತನಪರಾಃ ಕುರ್ವಙಿತು ನೋ ಮಙಿಗಲಮ್ ॥ ೭ ॥

वेदाश्चोपनिषद्गणाश्च विविधाः साङ्गाः पुराणान्विता
वेदान्ता ग्पि मन्त्रतन्त्रसहितास्तर्काः स्मृतीनां गणाः
काव्यालङ्कृतिनीतिनाटकयुताः शब्दाश्च नानाविधाः
श्रीविष्णोर्गुणनामकीर्तनपराः कुर्वन्तु नो मङ्गलम् ॥ ७ ॥

vEdaashchOpaniShadgaNaashcha vividhaaH saaMgaaH puraaNaanvitaa
vEdaantaa api mantratantrasahitaastarkaaH smRutInaaM gaNaaH
kaavyaalankRutinItinaaTakayutaaH shabdaashcha naanaavidhaaH
shrIviShNOrguNanaamakIrtanaparaaH kurvantu nO mangalam || 7 ||

Meaning:

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May the following varied types of sounds, always engrossed in extolling the qualities and names of the Lord, bless us with auspiciousness:

- Vedas, Upanishads and their components (known as vedaangaas)
- Puraana
- Vedaanta
- Mantra - tantra and associated Dialectical (Logic) texts
- Collection of Smritis
- Kaavya (poetry), alankaara (figures of speech), neeti (rules), naataka (dramas and plays)

Vedas:

Vedas are Supreme amongst all literary forms known to mankind. They are considered to be eternal and un-authored from time immemorial; they are only "seen", never composed or created. For this reason, they are supposed to be flawless and the best way of knowing about the Lord.

Fundamentally, there are 3 vedas only:
- Ruk (consisting mainly of poetic hymns),
- Yajus (mainly prose),
- Saama (musical hymns or melodies).

At the beginning of this Vaivasvata manvantara, Atharva muni propitiated Chaturmukha Brahma and with his blessings compiled the Atharva veda.

In the last dvaapara yuga (the 28th dvaapara in Vaivasvata manvantara) Lord Vedavyaasa segregated the vedas into 4 branches or shaakhas – Ruk shaakha consisting of Ruk Samhita, YajuH shaakha consisting of YajuH Samhita, Saama shaakha consisting of Saama Samhita and Atharva shaakha consisting of Atharva Samhita. He composed the 4 samhitaas and anointed 4 disciples to propagate the 4 shakhaas. These were Paila for Ruk Samhita, Vaishampaayana for YajuH Samhita, Jaimini for saama Samhita and Sumantu for Atharva Samhita.

Once, while coming down a narrow path in the Himalayas, Vaishampaayana inadvertently touched a boy coming in the opposite direction and caused him to fall to death in the ravines. Vaishampaayana came back to his ashrama and asked his disciples to perform penance on his behalf to resolve his brahma-hatyaa doshaa. The disciples started doing so. Yaagnyavalka was one of the disciples. He approached Vaishampaayana and humbly told him "Respected Guruji, why should all the disciples be troubled for this? Let me do it on everybody's behalf and get rid of your dosha". Vaishampaayana mistook this offer for arrogance and berated Yaagnyavalka and asked him to leave the ashrama. Yaagnyavalka left the ashrama and performed rigorous penance towards Soorya. Soorya was pleased with his efforts and blessed him with new vedic knowledge. This branch of Yajurveda is called Shukla Yajurveda since it came from the sun. The old portion with Vaishampaayana became known as Krishna Yajurveda.

Each Samhita was further developed into upa-shaakhas (branches). However, due to passage of time many of these upa-shaakhas have been lost and we are left with only a fraction of the original number. The table below lists the original number and what is available at present.

Samhita	Original #	aavailable	Names of samhitas available

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Ruk	24	3	Shaakala Samhita, baaShkala Samhita, saankhyaayana Samhita
S YajuH	15	2	kaaNva Samhita, maadhyandina samhita
K Yaju	86	3	Taittiri Samhita, kaTha Samhita, maitraayaNa Samhita
Saama	1000	3	Jaimineeya, raaNaayaneeya, kouthuma
aatharva	12	1	Pippalaada samhita

The total of the original number of upashaakaas = 24+15+86+1000+12 = 1137. When you add the digits 1+1+3+7 you get 12 which further becomes three. When you total what is remaining, that also ends up as 12 which becomes three. This is interesting because the Vedas are also called trayee (group of three).

Four-fold nature of the Vedas:

Every veda has four aspects. The first is Samhita or Mantra bhaaga. The second is BraahmaNa, which describes the karma bhaaga (portion that prescribes actions to be taken) of the Samhita. The essence of BraahmaNa is AaraNyaka. The essence of the AaraNyaka is the Upanishad, which is also considered to be the quint-essence of the vedas.

There was a tradition or belief in the past that study of these 4 aspects should be undertaken through the 4 phases of a person's life - Samhita during Brahmacharya, BraahmaNa during Gruhasthaashrama, AraNyaka during vaanaprastha and Upanishad during sanyaasa. This is only a rough and general distribution; eligible, interested and meritorious people can study and practice any aspect during any phase.

Upanishad

Even though Upanishads are technically part of the Vedas they are generally reviewed separately because they contain quintessential philosophical truths about God and Creation. There are more than 100 upanishads, but 10 out of these are the most well known. Both Acharya Shankara and Acharya Madhva have written commentaries on these 10 upanishads. These are listed below, along with the veda Samhita they come from.

Veda	**Upanishad**
Rig	mahaitareyOpanishat
Saama	talavakaarOpanishat aka kenOpanishat
Saama	ChandOgOpanishat
Atharva	maandookOpanishat
Atharva	aatharvaNOpanishat
Atharva	ShatprashnOpanishat aka PrashnOpanishat
K Yajur	taittireeyOpanishat
K Yajur	kaaThakyOpanishat
S Yajur (kaaNva paaTha)	yagneeyamantryOpanishat aka Ishaavaasya upanishat
S Yajur (kaaNva paaTha)	bruhadaaraNyakOpanishat

Besides the above 10, some of the other Upanishads popular in shastra are MahaanaaraayaNOpanishat, naaraayaNOpanishat, shvEtaashvatarOpanishat, atharvashikOpanishat, kouSheetakyupanishat, mantrikOpanishat, agnirahasyOpanishat, subaalOpanishat, nRushimataapanyupanishat etc.

Vedangas:

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The Vedanga' (literally "limbs of the Veda") are six supplementary disciplines connected with the study of the Vedas. These are:

Shiksha: phonetics, phonology, pronunciation.
Vyakarana : grammar and linguistic analysis
Nirukta : etymology, explanation of words
Chandas : prosody - Focused on poetic meters
Jyotisha : Astrology and Astronomy (finding the right time for performing any action)
Kalpa : ritual instructions.

PuraaNas

These are ancient works composed by Lord Vedavyasa to supplement the study of vedas and understand their true import. Itihaasas are also ancient works that assist in the study of vedas. They are moola RaamaayaNa, Mahaabhaarata and Pancharaatra.

"Moola Ramayana" is the first Ramayana. It was composed by Lord Hayagriva and taught to Chaturmukha Brahma. It has 100 crore (1 billion) verses. Brahma taught this to Narada and Narada to Valmiki. Valmiki condensed it and presented it in twenty-four thousand Shlokas. There is a very popular verse that mentions this fact ("charitam raghunaathasya shatakOTi pravistaram .."). However, nobody except Acharya Madhva talks about. This work, unfortunately, is not available to humans.

There are 18 Mahaa-puraaNas, all composed by Lord Vedavyasa, with many more smaller puraaNas known as upa-puraaNas. The names of the Mahaapuraanas along with their size (in terms of verses) and their classification (as saatvika, raajasika and taamasika) is listed below. This classification is given by a verse in the Padma puraana.

PuraaNa	**Size**	**Classification**
Bhaagavata	18000	Saatvika
Vishnu	23000	Saatvika
Naaradeeya	25000	Saatvika
Garuda	19000	Saatvika
Varaaha	24000	Saatvika
Padma	55000	Saatvika
BrahmaanDa	12000	Raajasika
Brahmavaivarta	18000	Raajasika
MaarkanDeya	9000	Raajasika
BhaviShya	14500	Raajasika
Vaamana	10000	Raajasika
Braahma	10000	Raajasika
Matsya	14000	Taamasika
Koorma	17000	Taamasika
Linga	11000	Taamasika
Shaiva (vaayu prOkta)	24000	Taamasika
Skaanda	81100	Taamasika

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Agni	15400	Taamasika

The upa-puraaNas are also supposed to be 18 in number but there is no unanimity about their names. The most popular upa-puraaNas are Nrusimha puraaNa, shivadharma puraaNa, saamba puraaNa, dEvi puraaNa (aka dEvi bhaagavata), soura Puraana.

Vedanta

The term "Vedanta" refers to works that reveal the true meaning of Vedas. There are many such works but the most prominent one is Brahma Sutra, composed by Lord Vedavyasa. This is considered to be the foundation of all theology and has commentaries by all three Achaaryas. Two other works that supplement the brahma sootra are dEva meemaamsa and karma meemaamsa. Unfortunately, these two are not available to humans.

The word 'aagama' is derived from the root 'gam' which indicates dynamism. If vedas are the science, Aagamas are the recipes for reaching the Lord. Some people interpret Aagama as something that "arrived" from God. Mantras and tantras are aspects of aagama. There are three types of aagamas – Shaiva, shaakta and vaiShNava. The crown jewel of all vaiShNava aagamas is Pancharaatra.

Tarka

"Tarka" refers to dialectical works that examine the veracity of statements based on logic. The most well known is Brahma-tarka, which is extant today. Other works like Acharya Madhva's Anuvyaakhyaana, Jayateertha"s Nyaaya Sudha and Vyaasa teertha's Nyaayamruta, Tarka taanDava and Chandrika are other examples in this category.

Smriti:

Smriti (literally "that which is remembered") are authored works, written to supplement knowledge encapsulated in the vedas. The traditional definition of Smriti includes the Vedaangas, Puraanas, Mahaabhaarata, Raamayana and other works. However, in this verse, it is used in a much narrower sense as the vedangas, puraaNas and tarka have been explicitly mentioned. Here, it simply refers to dharma shastra works written by sages like Manu, Parashara, etc. Old manuscripts refer to 20 smritis – Manu, Atri, ViShNu, Hareeta, Yaagnyavalkya, Ushanas, Angeeras, Yama, Aapastambha, Samvarta, Kaatyaayana, Bruhaspati, Paraashara, Vyaasa, Shankha, Likhita, Daksha, Goutama, Shaataapa and VasishTha.

In addition to all the above works, Sri Raja Rajeshwara yati includes all forms of literature - Kaavya (poetry), Alankaara (poetic figure of speech), Neeti (rules), NaaTaka (dramas and plays). This is because of the belief that all words and sounds are basically epithets of the Lord and sing His praise.

Verse 8:

ಆದಿತ್ಯಾದಿನವಗ್ರಹಾಃ ಶುಭಕರಾ ಮೇಷಾದಚಿಚಿಯೋ ರಾಶಚಿಚಿಯೋ
ನಕ್ಷತ್ರಾಣಿ ಸಚಿಚಿಯೋಗಕಾಶ್ಚ ತಿಥಚಿಚಿಯುಸ್ತದ್ದೇವತಾಸ್ತದ್ಗಣಾಃ

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ಮಾಸಾಬ್ದಾ ಋತವಸ್ತಥೈವ ದಿವಸಾಃ ಸಂಧ್ಯಾಸ್ತಥಾ ರಾತ್ರಯಃ
ಸರ್ವೇ ಸ್ಥಾವರಜಂಗಮಾಃ ಪ್ರತಿದಿನಂ ಕುರ್ವಂತು ನೋ ಮಂಗಲಮ್ ॥
೮ ॥

आादित्यादिनवग्रहाः शुभकरा मेषादयो राशयो
नक्षत्राणि सयोगकाश्च तिथयस्तद्देवतास्तद्गणाः
मासाब्दा ऋतवस्तथैव दिवसाः संध्यास्तथा रात्रयः
सर्वे स्थावरजङ्गमाः प्रतिदिनं कुर्वन्तु नो मङ्गलम् ॥ ८ ॥

aadityaadinavagrahaaH shubhakaraa mEShaadayO raashayO
nakShatraaNi sayOgakaashcha tithayastaddEvataastadgaNaaH
maasaabdaa Rutavastathaiva divasaaH sandhyaastathaa raatrayaH
sarvE sthaavarajaMgamaaH pratidinaM kurvantu nO mangalam || 8 ||

Meaning:

May the following bless us with auspiciousness every day:

- The nine planets,
- The 12 Raashis
- The 27 stars on which Hindu Astrology is based
- The 6 Yogas and 12 karanas listed by astrology
- The 30 tithis associated with each lunar month
- The 12 Hindu months
- The 60 years listed in the Hindu calendar
- The 6 Rutus or Seasons
- Days, Nights and Sandhyas (the intermediate periods like Dawn, Dusk etc)
- All fixed (trees, plants etc) and moving living beings

Appendix 2 contains a detailed explanation of all the above aspects.

When performing sankalpa for any pooja or during sandhyavandane it is customary to recite the Samvatsara, Ayana, Maasa, Paksha, Tithi, Vaasara, Nakshatra, Yoga and Karana. Each aspect blesses us with specific benefits. It should be remembered that there are specific divine forces associated with each of these and they are the ones who bless us and shower their grace.

Verse 9:

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ಇತ್ಯೇತದ್ ವರಮಚಿಚಿಗಲಾಷ್ಟಕಮಿದಚಿಚಿ ಶ್ರೀರಾಜರಾಜೇಶ್ವರೇ
ಣಾऽಖ್ಯಾತಚಿಚಿ ಜಗತಾಮಭೀಷ್ಟಫಲದಚಿಚಿ ಸರ್ವಾಶುಭಧ್ವಚಿಚಿಸನಮ್
ಮಾಚಿಚಿಗಲ್ಯಾದಿಶುಭಕ್ರಿಚಿಚಿಯಾಸು ಸತತಚಿಚಿ ಸಚಿಚಿಧ್ಯಾಸು ವಾ ಚಿಚಿಯಃ ಪಠೇದ್
ಧರ್ಮಾರ್ಥಾದಿಸಮಸ್ತವಾಚಿಚಿಛಿತಫಲಚಿಚಿ ಪ್ರಾಪ್ನೋತ್ಯಸೌ ಮಾನವಃ ॥ ೯ ॥

इत्येतद् वरमङ्गलाष्टकमिदं श्रीराजराजेश्वरे
णाऽख्यातं जगतामभीष्टफलदं सर्वाशुभध्वंसनम्
माङ्गल्यादिशुभक्रियासु सततं संध्यासु वा यः पठेद्
धर्मार्थादिसमस्तवाञ्छितफलं प्राप्नोत्यसौ मानवः ॥ ९ ॥

ityEtad varamangalaaShTakamidaM shrIraajaraajEshvarE
Naa&khyaataM jagataamabhIShTaphaladaM sarvaashubhadhvaMsanam
maangalyaadishubhakriyaasu satataM saMdhyaasu vaa yaH paThEd
dharmaarthaadisamastavaanChitaphalaM praapnOtyasou maanavaH || 9 ||

Meaning:

This worth Mangalaashtaka, composed by the yati known as Sri Raaja-Raajeshwara, showers one with all desires and destroys all inauspiciousness. The person who recites this during a wedding and other auspicious events, or during Sandhyaakaala (dawn and dusk), obtains Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth) and all other desires.

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Appendix A: Taaratamya (hierarchy of living beings)

Introduction:

Taaratamya or gradation of living beings is one of the most important concepts that any seeker of philosophical truth must grasp. In fact, shastras are very explicit that grasping this important concept is a pre-condition for mukti or liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. However, it is very surprising that none of the Acharyas, other than Acharya Madhava, include this concept in their teachings. This may perhaps be considered as one of the unique tenets in tattavavaada (aka Dvaita) propounded by Acharya Madhva. However, this is not a concept he invented or discovered. It is documented in several places in shastra and major religious works. He merely drew our attention to this concept and highlighted the importance of understanding it properly.

Explanation:

Jeevas or living beings are graded and placed in a hierarchy. The gradation is based on the inherent nature or worth of the jeeva (yogyata). The hierarchy consists of a distinct number of classes or groups, called Kakshes. Jeevas that are roughly equivalent are placed in the same kakshe and those that are superior to them are placed in a higher kakshe while inferior ones are placed in a lower kakshe. Taaratamya exists among all kinds of jeevas – Saatvik (headed towards liberation or eternal happiness) Raajasik (destined for a mixture of sorrow and happiness) & Taamasik (headed towards eternal damnation). Generally, saatvik jeevas are placed into 32 or more kakshes, but there is no unanimity as different sources list slightly different numbers. The good news is that here is broad agreement at the top of the hierarchy (Vishnu to Budha) and the lower half (from Aajaanaja devatas to Manushottamas), with slight differences in the middle. This document lists two most popular classifications.

Lord Vishnu or Vishnu is the highest in taaratamya. He is infinitely superior to all jeevas in all aspects. He has an infinite number of auspicious attributes (like strength, knowledge, patience, mercy etc). There is nobody superior to him or even equal to him. He grants liberation to deserving souls. He has thousands of names and in fact scholars say that every sound is an epithet of His name. He is worshipped through many ashottaras (108 names) and sahasranamas (1000 names). His most popular names are - Vishnu, Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, Hari, 24 names from Keshava to Krishna, 1000 names (Vishwa to Sarvapraharana), 108 names (Vishnu ashottara), Ten avataras (matsya to Kalki).

Vishnu is followed by his consort Lakshmi. She is ever liberated and is the abhimaani for Prakruti. She is aka Shree, Bhu, Durga, Ambhrani, Hree, Sita, Rukmini, Satya, Jayanti, Dakshina etc. She is equal to Vishnu in Time and Space but infinitely inferior in guNas or auspicious attributes.

1 Vishnu (SarvOttamma).
2 Lakshmi. Vishnu’s spouse.
3 Brahma, Vaayu : (Both are Jeevottama). Vaayu aka mukhya-praaNa has three well known avataaraas - Hanuman, Bhima, Madhva (Ananda teertha).
4 Saraswati (Brahma’s wife), Bhaarathi (Vaayu’s wife)
5 Garuda, Shesha, Rudra
6 Shanmahishi-s of Krishna : Jaambavati, Bhadra, Neela, Kaalindi, Mitravinda, Lakshana
7 Suparni (Wife of Garuda), Vaaruni (Wife of Shesha), Paarvati (Wife of Rudra)

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8 Indra (aka Devendra), Kaama. Kaama has 3 forms - Manmatha (son of Vishnu), Sanatha kumaara, (son of Brahma) and Kumaara (aka Skanda, Shanmukha), the son of Rudra.
9 Ahankaarika Praana. He is Shareera abhimaani.
10 Svaayambhu Manu, Daksha Prajapati, Bruhaspati (aka Deva guru), Shachi (wife of Indra), Rati (wife of Kaama), Aniruddha (Son of Kaama)
11 Pravaha Vaayu. He is sparsha-maani (touch)
12 Surya (aka Ravi, Aditya), Chandra (aka Shashi), Yama (aka Dharma) and Shataroopa (Svaayumbhu Manu's wife). Yama is the son of Ravi.
13 Varuna
14 Naarada
15 Bhrugu, Agni, Prasooti (Wife of Daksha Prajapati and daughter of Swaayambhoo Manu)
16 Vaivasvata Manu (son of Surya), Vishwamitra and Sapta Rishis of Swaayamboo Manvantara - Mareechi, Athri, Angirasa, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, VashishTa
17 Mitra, Niraruti, Pravaahi devi (Wife of Pravaha Vaayu), Taara devi (Wife of Bruhaspati)
18 Ganapati (vighnaadhipati), Vishvaksena (son of vayu), Kubera (dhanaadhipati), Ashwini Devatas (they are twins born to Surya; their names are naasatya & dasra) and Shesha Shatastha SOmarasapaanaarha-s (covered separately)
19. Karmaja Devatas (covered separately)
20 Parjanya (Megabhimaani), Ganga (Wife of Varuna), Sangnya (Wife of Surya), Rohini (Wife of Chandra) Shyaamala (Wife of Yama) and Viraadusha (Wife of aniruddha) – Brahmaandaabhimaanini,
21 Koormaadi anaakhyaata Devatha-s
22 Svaaha (Wife of Agni) – Vaak (speech) Abhimaani
23 Budha (Jalaabhimaani)
24 Usha (Wife of Ashvini Devata-s) – Naamaabhimaanini.
25 Kuja . Some scholars include him in the 19th class
26 Shanaishchara, Dhara (pruthvi maanini)
27 Pushkara (Karmaabhimaani)
28. Devaki and Yashoda. Kashyapa's wife Aditi incarnated as Devaki. Dhara, wife of Drona vasu, incarnated as Yashoda. Both were mothers of Lord Krishna
29. 16,100 sons of Agni, who became the 16100 wives of Krishna. Amongst these, Kasheru, daughter of Tvashtru is slightly higher.
30 Aajaanaja Devata-s and others (covered separately.)
31 Chira Pitrus
32 Deva Gandharvas
33 Manushya Gandharvas
34 Kshitipa-s (Maanusha Chakravartis)
35 ManushyOttamas – Nara, Bhuchara, Khechara, Krimi, Truna

Taratamya as per Harikathamruta saaara

In his magnum opus Harikathamruta saara, Sri Jagannaatha daasaru also lists the above taratamya, but there are some minor variations. He combines Devaki and Yashoda with Usha and does not mention Kuja or Agni putras. The relevant section is listed below.

24 Usha (Wife of Ashvini Devata-s), Devaki and Yashoda

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25 Shanaishchara, Dhara
26 Pushkara
27 Aajaanaja Devata-s

Shesha Shatasta (18th Kakshe):

There are 100 celestials who are allowed to partake sOma. They are called sOmapaanaarha devatas. Out of these, 14 are listed separately in other kakshes. The balance 86 are called Shesha shatasta (which literally means 'remaining ones out of 100'). They are all in the 19th Kaksha and equal to Ganesha, kubera etc. They are listed by name below. It should be noted in passing that there is no unanimity about the names of Vasus, Aditya, Rudras and Maruts. One may come across other names in other sources.

7 Vasus (out of 8) - DronaH, praNaH, dhruvaH, arkaH, dOShaH, vastu aka dyu, vibhaavasu. The missing 8th Vasu is Agni in 15th kakshe
6 Adityas (out of 12) – Aryamaa, Pooshaa, TvaShTaa, Savitaa, BhagaH, Dhaataa. The other Adityas are Vishnu (1), Indra (8), Ravi (12), Varuna (13), Mitra (17)
10 Vishve devas (protectors of shraaddha) – KratuH, DakshaH, SavaH, SatyaH, KaamaH, KaalaH, DhuriH, LOchanaH, PurUrava, Aardrava
10 Rudras (out of 11) – RaivataH, OjaH, BhavaH, BheemaH, VaamaH, UgraH, VRuShaakapiH, Ajaikapaat, AhirbudhniH, ViroopaaH. The one missing from this list is Shiva (5)
47 maruts (out of 49). The other two are Aham prana (9) and Pravaha vaayu (11). The 47 are PraaNaH, ApaanaH, VyaanaH, UdaanaH, SamaanaH, Naaga, Koorma, KRukala, Devadatta, Dhananjaya, AavaH, UdvaH, ParaavaH, VivaH, SamvaH, ShambhuH, ShankhuH, KalaH, ShvaasaH, AnalaH, AnilaH, PratibhaH, KumudaH, KaantaH, ShuchiH, ShvEtaH, AjitaH, GuruH, SangnyaH, PravartakaH, KaalaH, DakShaH, SOmyaH, KapiH, JaDaH, ManDookaH, HanuH, PingaH, KampanaH.
1 Pitru pati (out of 3) – Kavya Vaahana Agni. The other pitru patis are Yama (12) and Soma (12).
3 Rubhus – RubhuH, Vibhvaa, Aajasha
2 devis who are abhimaanis of Dyaava and Pruthvi

Totally 86 celestials are in this category, with another 14 in higher kakshes. The 14 are – Vishnu (1), Vaayu (3), Brahma (3), Shiva (5), Indra (8), Aham prana (9), Aniruddha (10), Pravaha vaayu (11), Ravi (12), Yama (12), Soma (12), Varuna (13), Agni (15), Mitra (17).

Karmaja Devatas (19th kakshe):

MareechiH – son of Mukhya praanaH. He is the abhimaani for bhoota vaayu
PaavakaH – son of Mukhya Agni. He is the abhimaani for bhoota agni
Indra's 2 sons – Jayanta aka Yagna and ShambhuH. They are padaabhimaanis (our 2 feet)
Shukra (Daitya guru), YavanaH (Shukra's brother), Uchatya (Bruhaspati's brother)
3 (out of 4) Brahma's maanasa putras – SanakaH, SanandanaH, SanaatanaH. The 4th putra is Sanatkumara (8)
Kashyapa and other Gruhastha (married) Rishis
7 Indras for upcoming manvantaras – BaliH, AdbhutaH, ShambhuH, VidhRutiH, Rutadhaamaa, DivaspatiH, ShuchiH. The indras for the first 7 manvantaras are Yagna (Vishnu Himself) for Svaayambhu, rOchana (Vaayu) for SvaarOchiSha, Satyajit (yama) for Uttama, Trishika and Vibhu (naastya and dasra) for Taapasa and Raivata, Mandradyumna (Indra) for ChaakshuSha , Purandara (Indra) for the current Vaivasvata.

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11 Manus (out of 14). These are Swaarochisha, Uttama, Raivata, Chaakshusa, saavarNi, Daksha saavarNi, Brahma saavarNi, Dharma saavarNi, Rudra saavarNi, Deva saavarNi, Indra saavarNi. The remaining 3 Manus are Swaayambhu (10), Taapasa (Vishnu Himself) and Vaivasvata (16)
7 pitru patis out of 10. These are vairaja, agniShvaata, barhiShada, sOmapa, sukaala, Angeerasa, susvada. The other 3 pitru patis are kavya vaaha (18), Yama (12) and Soma (12)
8 Vishnu dvaarapaalakas (gate keepers) – jayaH, vijayaH, chanDaH, prachanDaH, nandaH, sunandaH, kumudaH, kumudEkShaNa
8 main gandharvas – tumburu, chitrasena and others
8 Main apasaras – Rambha, oorvashi, menaka, tilOttama and others.
Vishva karma (deva shilpi)
Chitra Gupta (Yama's lieutenant) – book keeper of our sins and good deeds.
AruNaH (charioteer of Ravi and brother of Garuda)
Divine Vahaanas (vehicles) – Nandi (Shiva) and Airaavata (Indra)
SurabhiH (divine cow), Kalpa VrukSha (divine tree and granter of wishes)
Devatas of Night and day
Devatas of Poornima (Full moon) and Amavaasya (New Moon)
Abhijit
Abhimaanis of Oushadas and vanaspatis (plants and trees)
100 Rajarishis who attained celestial status – PruthuH, KartiveeryaH, ShashabinduH, PriyavrataH, UttaanapaadaH, MaandhaataaH, GayaH, KakustaH, NahuShaH, AmbareeshaH, BharataH (son of dushyanta), JadabharataH, MaruttaH, HarishchandraH, PrahlaadaH, Pareekshit and others.
Abhimaani devatas of Havis (offering in yagna), Kapaala (vessels used in yagna)

Aajaanaja devatas (30th Kakshe)

Anaakhyaata Aajaanaja devaaH
100 Gandharvas
100 Apsara strees
99,99,99,900 (100 less than 100 crore) Rishis

aaajaanaja devatas (according to Harikathaamruta saara)

HKS has a totally different take on this. They are listed in 27th kakshe. The details are listed below

Aakhyaata Aajaanaja Devata-s:
1. 92 Gandharva-s 2. Kratu
2. Kratu
3. Sindhu
4. 908 Apsara Stree-s (92 appear in Kaksha 19)
5. 16,100 Children of Agni (Born as Shri Krishna Patni-s)
Anaakhyaata Aajaanaja Devata-s:
1. Vibudha-s (100 in total)
2. Deva Bhrutya Pitru-s (100 in total)
3. Deva Bhrutya Asura-s (100 in total)

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4. Deva Gaayana Gandharva-s (100 in total)
5. Deva Nrutya Apsara Stree-s (100 in total)
6. Siddha Sanketa-s (70 in total) [Deva Karya Nirvaahaka-s]
7. Vaahana carriers YakShara-s (70 in total)
8. Shibika carriers RakShasa-s (30 in total)
9. Deva Paricharaka Chaarana-s (30 in total)
10. Sevaakarta Bhuta-s (70 in total)
11. Kinnara-s (70 in total)
12. Pishacha-s (70 in total)
13. Kubera Bhrutya Guhyaka-s (7 in total)
14. Preta-s (70 in total)
15. Vidyadhara-s (70 in total)
16. VaruNa Bhrutya Naaga-s (5 in total)

Abhimaani devatas

Our Upanishads list 16 abhimaani devatas whose grace is necessary for salvation.

Name	**Kakshe**	**Abhimaani of**
Usha	24	Naama. Usha gives us attachment towards the Lord's names
Svaaha	22	Vaak. (speech)
Parjanya	20	Manas. (Mind) Parjanya is the lowest devata controlling the mind
Mitra	19	Sankalpa. (determination to do something)
aagni	15	Chitta. This is the memory shell containing long term memories (including those earned during previous births).
Varuna	13	Dhyaana. (meditation)
Chandra	12	Vignaana. (in-depth knowledge of an entity)
Pravaha vaayu	11	Bala . (Strength - both physical and mental)
aaniruddha	10	aanna. (Food and Desire for knowledge)
aaham Prana	9	aap (water and satisfaction from knowledge)
Indra	8	Tejas (lustre or radiance – both external and mental)
Uma	7	aakasha (space and sthira Pratibha i.e, consistent capability)
Shiva	5	Sthira smriti (unwavering remembrance or concentration)
Bharati & Sarasvati	4	aasha (the happiness stemming from aparoksha gyaana)
Mukhya Prana & Brahma	3	Jiva (the jeevaatma and happiness in Moksha)

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Appendix B: Concept of time in shastra

In day-to-day life, our understanding of time is linear and straightforward. Sixty seconds make a minute, 60 minutes make an hour, 24 hours make a day and so on. Beyond that we talk of week, month, year, century and millennium. This is universally accepted and uniformly applied. One year is the same for every human being in the world, no matter whether one lives in the North Pole or the South Pole.

In shastra, a living being's concept of time is influenced heavily by where he/she is in the hierarchy . They say that 1 year for humans is equivalent to 1 day for devatas and pitrus. Thus 360 human years is equivalent to 1 year for devatas. On a different scale, 1,00,000 human years is equivalent to 1 second for Brahma. So, 1 day for Brahma is equal to 8.64 billion human years (3600 X 24 X 100000). The life span of Brahma is defined as 100 years. This would be 311.04 trillion human years (=8.640 billion X 360 X 100)!!

Yuga, Maha-yuga, Manvantara

yuga' refers to a duration of time, running into hundreds of thousands of years. Shastras say that yugas occur in cycles of 4 - Kruta, Treta, Dvaapara and Kali yuga. Kruta yuga occurs at the beginning of a cycle and is 17,28,000 years. This is followed by Treta (12,96.000), dvaapara (8,64,000) and finally Kali yuga (4,32,000). One set of these 4 yugas is called mahaa-yuga, which lasts 43,20,000 years. Shastras call this yuga-chakra or the cycle of yugas, because the yugas repeat in cycles.

1000 such mahaa-yugas is equivalent to one daytime (12 hours) of brahma. This amounts to 4.32 billion years (43,20,000 X 1000). Since a day consists of 24 hours, 1 day in Brahma's life is equal to 2000 maha-yugas or 8.640 billion years.

One daytime of brahma is called kalpa. It is divided into 14 equal parts, called Manvantaras. Each manvantara is around 71 maha-yugas. There is a period of deluge or pralaya after each manvantara.

The manvantaras are listed below in the correct order. It should be noted that there is no unanimity about the names and manus of these manvantaras as different works cite different names; but there is consensus about the first 7 manvantaras. Each Manvantara has a Manu and an Indra.

Name	**Manu**	**Indra**
Swaayambhu	Swayambhu, one of the sons of Chaturmukha Brahma	Yagna (Vishnu)
Swaarochisha	Swaarochisha, son of Agni	Rochana (Vaayu)
Uttama	Uttama, son of Priyavrata	Satyajit (Yama)
Taapasa (or Taamasa)	Tapasa, son of Priyavrata (brother of Uttama). He was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu	Trishika & Vibhu (Naastya & Dasra)
Raivata	Raivata, twin of Tapasa. He was also an incarnation of Lord Vishnu	- Same -
Chaakshusa	Chaakshusa, son of Chakshu.	Mandradyumna (Indra)
Vaivasvata	Vaivasvata, son of Vivasvaan (Sun). **This is the current manvantara**	Purandara (Indra)

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SaavarNi	saavarNi	Bali
Daksha saavarNi	Daksha saavarNi	AdbhutaH
Brahma saavarNi	Brahma saavarNi	ShambhuH
Dharma saavarNi	Dharma saavarNi	VidhRutiH
Rudra saavarNi	Rudra saavarNi	Rutadhaamaa
Rauchya or deva saavarNi	Rauchya or deva saavarNi	DivaspatiH
Indra saavarNi	Indra saavarNi	ShuchiH

Panchaang (Almanac)

The word 'panchaang" means a thing that has 5 parts or limbs. In the context of an almanac, these five are :

- Day of Week, also called Vaara or Vaasara
- Nakshatra (star or constellation in which Moon is currently transiting)
- Tithi (moon phase, with respect to Sun's position); this is usually along with Pakha (Shukla or Krishna)
- Yoga: the angular relationship between Sun and Moon. One Yoga equals 13 degrees:20 minutes. There are 27 Yogas in 360 degrees
- Karana (half a lunar day) (each Tithi has 2 Karanas). One *Karaṇa* equals 6 degree difference between Moon and Sun.

Vedic Astrology says that knowing one or more aspects of these 5 Elements fetches the following benefits

- Uttering the Vaara (Day of the Week) will bless one with long life
- Uttering the Nakshatra (Star the Moon is in) will dissolve one's bad karmas
- Uttering the Tithi (Moon Phase) will bring about immense wealth.
- Uttering the Yoga will keep deep diseases or afflictions away
- Uttering the Karana will get desires fulfilled.

Samvatsara:

The Hindu calendar consists of 60 years or samvatsaras. These repeat cyclically. They are listed below. In some cases, there is a slight variation in the name. This is also indicated.

SL	Samvatsara
1	Prabhava
2	Vibhava
3	Shukla
4	Pramoda
5	Prajaapati
6	Angiras
7	Shreemukha
8	Bhaava
9	Yuva

21	Sarvajith
22	Sarvadhaari
23	VirOdhi
24	Vikriti
25	Khara
26	Nandana
27	Vijaya
28	Jaya
29	Manmatha

41	Plavanga
42	Keelaka
43	Soumya
44	SaadhaaraNa
45	VirOdhakrut
46	Paridhaavi
47	Pramaadi
48	aananda
49	Raakshasa

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10	Dhaataa	30	Durmukha (Durmukhi)	50	Anala (nala)
11	Eeshvara	31	Hemalamba (hEvilambi)	51	Pingala
12	Bahudhaanya	32	Vilamba (Vilambi)	52	Kaalayukta
13	Pramaathi	33	Vikaari	53	Siddharthi
14	Vikrama	34	Shaarvari	54	Raudra
15	Vrisha (Vishu)	35	Plava	55	Durmati
16	Chitrabhaanu	36	Shubhakrut	56	Dundubhi
17	Svabhaanu	37	Shobhana	57	RudhirOdgaari
18	TaaraNa	38	KrOdhi	58	Raktaakshi
19	Paarthiva	39	Vishvaavasu	59	Krodhana
20	Vyaya (avyaya)	40	Paraabhava	60	Kshaya.

Ayana:

There are 2 ayanaas based on the movement of the sun. When the Sun is moving Northward it is Uttaraayana. When the Sun is moving South it is Dakshinaayana. Uttaraayana is considered to be more auspicious than Dakshinaayana.

Maasa (Month), Ritu (Season):

The Gregorian calendar has 12 months, starting with January and ending with December. The Hindu calendar also 12 maasas or months, but these are named differently. There are also 6 Ritus or seasons. Each Ritu has 2 months. The names of the months, Ritus and their abhimaani deities are listed below:

Maasa	**Maasa Niyaamaka**	**Ritu**	**Ritu Niyaamaka**
Chaitra	Vishnu	Vasanta	Veda vyasa
Vaishaka	Madhusudhana		
Jyeshta	Trivikrama	Greeshma	Aniruddha
AashaaDha	Vaamana		
Shraavana	Shreedhara	Varsha	Pradyumna
Bhaadrapada	Hrusheekesha		
Aashvayuja (aashveeja)	Padmanabha	Sharad	Sankarshana
Kaartika	Damodara		
Maargashira (or Maargasheersha)	Keshava	Hemant	Vasudeva
Pushya	NaaraayaNa		
Maagha	Maadhava	Shishira	NaaraayaNa
Phalguna	Govinda		

Mala maasa (aka adhika maasa) and Kshaya maasa:

The Sun and Moon transit through the 12 Raashis at different speeds. The Sun stays approximately 1 month in each Raashi, before moving to the next one. The day the Sun enters a Raashi it is called Sankramana or

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Sankraanti of that Raashi. For example, when Sun enters Makara raashi it is called Makara sankraanti. The Moon stays roughly 27 – 29 days in one raashi before moving to the next one. Normally, by the time the moon moves from one rashi to another, a solar sankramana would have occurred in that lunar month. However, there is an exception roughly once every 33 months. In this case, even though the moon transits from one rashi to another, there is no sankramana. Such a lunar month is called Adhika maasa (aka mala maasa). Sometime, there can be 2 sankaramanas in one lunar month. Such a month is called Kshaya maasa. During Adhika maasa no shubha functions (like Marriage, Upanayana etc are performed). This month is reserved for pious activities like gyaana, daana, etc. It is customary to gift 33 fruits or appoopaas (a sweet dish) to learned brahmins during Adhika maasa.

Paksha (Fortnight):

The lunar month is divided into 2 halves - Shukla Paksha (when the moon is waxing or growing in size) and Krishna Paksha (when the moon is waning or diminishing in size).

Tithi (day):

Each paksha has 15 tithis (days). The first 14 tithis have the same name in each paksha except that there is prefix "Shukla" or "Krishna" to indicate which paksha it belongs to. The 15th tithi is completely different. In the case of Shukla Paksha, the 15th tithi is called Poornima (Full Moon Day), whereas in the case of Krishna Paksha it is called Amaavaasye (New Moon Day).

Tithi	**Devata**
Pratipat	Agni
Dvitiya	Brahma
Tritiya	Gauri (Paarvati)
Chaturthi	Ganesha
Panchami	Serpents
Shashti	Subramanya aka Kumara
Saptami	Ravi
Ashtami	SadyOjaata (form of Shiva)
Navami	Durga
Dashami	Shesha
Ekadashi	Dharma aka Yama
Dvaadashi	Vishnu
Trayodashi	Kama
Chaturdashi	Shiva
Poornima	Chandra
Amaavase	Pitrus

It should be noted that tithi start and end times do not coincide with our calendar hours. So, it is common for a day to have 2 tithis, where the first tithi ends sometime during the day and the second tithi starts thereafter. In such cases, the tithi that is active during sunrise is the one used for sankalpa. The exception to this rule is Ekadashi. Fasting is to be done only if Dashami ends at least 1.5 hours before sunrise; if not that day is considered as equivalent to Dashami and fasting should not be done.

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Vaasara (Day of the week):

There are 7 day of the week; they are called vaara or vaasara. The seven days and their abhimaani devatas are listed below.

Weekday	Vaasara	Other Names	Deity
Sunday	Ravi	Bhanu, Aditya	Shiva
Monday	Indu	Soma	Durga
Tuesday	Bhouma	Mangala, Kuja	Brihaspati
Wednesday	Soumya	Budha	Vishnu
Thursday	Bruhaspati	Guru	Brahma
Friday	Bhaargava	Shukra	Lakshmi
Saturday	Shani, Sthira	Manda	Kubera

Yoga

Yoga (aka Nitya Yoga) calculates the relative distance between the Sun and the Moon using the following formula:

Nithya Yoga = (Longitude of Sun in degrees + Longitude of Moon in degrees) / 13 degrees 20 minutes

There are a total of 27 yogas. The table below lists these yogas and their abhimaani devatas (patron gods)

	Yoga	Devata		Yoga	Devata
1	Vishkambha	Vishwe devatas	15	Vajra	Indra
2	Preeti	Marutts	16	Siddhi	HiraNya
3	Aayushmaan	Brahma	17	Vyateepaata	Vishwe devatas
4	Saubhaagya	Durga	18	Vareeyan	Vaayu
5	Shobhana	Pruthvi	19	Parigha	Pavamaana Soma
6	AtiganDa	Aditi	20	Shiva	Pruthvi
7	Sukarma	Ravi	21	Siddha	Indra
8	Dhruti	Raagni	22	Saadhya	Vishwe devatas
9	Shoola	Indra	23	Shubha	Marutts
10	GanDa	Marutts	24	Shukla	Indra
11	Vriddhi	Marutts	25	Brahma	Brahma
12	Dhruva	Praagni	26	Aindra	Indra
13	Vyaagaatha	Agni	27	Vaidhriti	aagni
14	HarshaNa	Vishnu			

Karana:

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Each tithi has 2 karanas. There are four Fixed Karanas and they occur only once in a month. They are Shakuni, Chatushpaat (aka Chatushpaada), Naagavaan (aka Naga), or Kimstughna (aka Kaustuva). There are seven recurring Karanas and they occur eight times during the lunar month. They are Bava, Baalava, Kaulava, Taitila, Gara, VaNik (aka Vanija), Bhadra (aka Vishti).

Total tithis in a lunar month = 7 (moveable) occuring 8 times + 4 fixed = 7 X 8 + 4 = 60

Their distribution is described below:

	Shukla Paksha		**Krishna Paksha**	
Tithi	**Day**	**Night**	**Day**	**Night**
Pratipat	**Kimstughna**	Bava	Baalava	Kaulava
Dvitiya	Baalava	Kaulava	Taitila	Gara
Tritiya	Taitila	Gara	VaNik	Bhadra
Chaturthi	VaNik	Bhadra	Bava	Baalava
Panchami	Bava	Baalava	Kaulava	Taitila
Shashti	Kaulava	Taitila	Gara	VaNik
Saptami	Gara	VaNik	Bhadra	Bava
Ashtami	Bhadra	Bava	Baalava	Kaulava
Navami	Baalava	Kaulava	Taitila	Gara
Dashami	Taitila	Gara	VaNik	Bhadra
Ekadashi	VaNik	Bhadra	Bava	Baalava
Dvaadashi	Bava	Baalava	Kaulava	Taitila
Trayodashi	Kaulava	Taitila	Gara	VaNik
Chaturdashi	Gara	VaNik	Bhadra	Shakuni
Poornima	Bhadra	Bava		
Amavase			**Chatushpaat**	**Naagavaan**

Each karana is associated with an animal and a special form of Lord Shiva as the devata. This is described below.

Karana	**aanimal**	**Devata**
Bava	Lion	SadyOjaata
Baalava	Tiger	Vaamadeva
Kaulava	Pig	Aghora
Taitila	Donkey	Tatpurusha
Gara	Elephant	Ishaana
VaNik	Buffalo (Yemme)	Shiva
Bhadra	Horse	Paarvateesha
Shakuni	Dog	Viroopaaksha
Chatushpaat	Bullock (Yettu)	Neelakanta
Naagavaan	Serpent	Umaapati
Kimstughna	Hen	Shooli

Nakshatras (Stars)

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aaccording to astronomy there are millions of stars. However, Hindu Astrology focuses on just 27 of these in its analysis. These stars are listed below, along with their abhimaani devatas.

Star	**Devata**	**Star**	**Devata**
Ashwini	aashwini devatas	Bharani	Yama
Krithika	aagni	Rohini	Brahma
Mrugashira	Chandra	Aardra	Rudra (Shiva)
Punarvasu	Aditi	Pushya	Bruhaspati (Guru)
aaashlesha	Serpent	Makha (orMagha)	Pitru devatas
Pubba (aka PoorvaPhalguni)	Bhaga	Uttara(aka UttaraPhalguni)	Aryama
Hasta	Ravi	Chitta	Tvashatru
Svaati	Vaayu	Vishaakha	Indra, Agni
Anuraadha	Mitra	Jyeshta	Indra
Moola	Nirruti	Poorvaashaada	Ap devatas
Uttaraashaada	Vishwe devatas	Shravana	Vishnu
Dhanishta	Ashta Vasus	Shatabhisha	Varuna
Poorvaabhaadra	Ajaikapaath	Uttaraabhaadra	Ahirbudhni
Revati	Poosha		

Bhaga, Aryama, Poosha, Mitra are four of the twelve children of Aditi (aka deva maata). These twelve children are collectively known as dvaadasha Adityaas. The more well known Adityas are Sun, Indra, Varuna and Vamana (Vishnu).

Shiva, Ajaikapaath and Ahirbudhni are part of the Ekaadasha Rudras (11 Rudras). Yama and Ashwini devatas are Ravi's children. Tvashtru is Ravi's father-in-law and is also the Divine carpenter. Nirruti is the patron deity of the South West direction. Ap devatas are the patron deities of water.

It is common for one star to end sometime during the day with the next star starting thereafter..

Raashis (Zodiac Signs):

There are 12 Raashis or zodiac signs. These are usually associated with the position of the Moon. Each of the 27 stars has 4 paadas or quarters, leading to 108 paadas in all (27 X 4). This is divided into groups of 9 to form 12 rashis. The Raashi, its western name and its associated stars are listed below. Each Raashi is associated with 3 stars.

Raashi	**Western Name**	**Stars**	**Ruler**
Mesha	Aries	Ashwini, Bharani, Krittika (1)	Kuja (Mars)
Vrushabha	Taurus	Krittika (2,3,4), Rohini, Mrigashira (1,2)	Shukra (Venus)
Mithuna	Gemini	Mrigashira (3,4), Aaridra, Punarvasu (1,2,3)	Budha (Mercury)
Kataka or karkaataka	Cancer	Punarvasu (4), Pushya, Aashlesha	Chandra (Moon)
Simha	Leo	Makha, Pubba, Uttara (1)	Ravi (Sun)
Kanya	Virgo	Uttara (2,3,4), Hasta, Chitta (1,2)	Budha (Mercury)

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Tula	Libra	Chitta (1,2), Svaati, Vishaakha (1, 2, 3)	Shukra (Venus)
Vrushchika	Scorpio	Vishaakha (4), Anuraadha, Jyeshta	Kuja (Mars)
Dhanus	Sagitarius	Moola, Poorvaashaada, Uttaraashaada(1)	Guru (Jupiter)
Makara	Aquarius	Uttaraashaada (2,3,4), Shravana, Dhanishta (1,2)	Shani (Saturn)
Kumbha	Capricorn	Dhanishta (3,4), Shatabhisha, Poorvaabhaadra (1,2,3)	Shani (Saturn)
Meena	Pisces	Poorvaabhaadra (4), Uttaraaabhaadra, Revati	Guru (Jupiter)

This is different from western astrology which focuses on Sun signs. The sun traverses each Raashi for exactly one month. For example when the Sun is transiting through Mesha rashi, that period is called Soura Mesha Maasa (Solar month of Mesha). This roughly corresponds to the Sun sign of Aries.

Nava-graha

The nine planets are listed below. Each planet, except Rahu and Ketu, owns one or two rashis listed above.

Name	**Other Names**	**Western Name**	**Raashi Owned**
Ravi	Aditya, Bhanu	Sun	Simha (Leo)
Chandra	Shashi, Soma, Indu	Moon	Kataka (Cancer)
Kuja	Mangala, Angaaraka	Mars	Mesha (Aries), Vrishchika (Scorpio)
Budha		Mercury	Mithuna (Gemini), Kanya (Virgo)
Guru	Brihaspati, Jeeva	Jupiter	Dhanus (Sagitarius), Meena (Pisces)
Shukra	Kavi	Venus	Vrushabha (Taurus), Tula (Libra)
Shani	Manda	Saturn	Makara (Aquarius), Kumbha (Capricorn)
Rahu		Dragon's Head	
Ketu		Dragon'stail	

Each of the planets listed above, except Rahu and Ketu, are known physical objects found in the solar system. However, the focus of shastra is not on this physical object but on the divine force controlling that object. For example, Chandra does not mean the object orbiting around the Earth; we mean the abhimaani devata, who incidentally has the same name.

Explanation of the sankalpa we perform

It is customary to utter a sankalpa (resolution or determination to perform an action) before any religious event. This section explains the phrases uttered in the sankalpa.

As stated before, each Chaturmukha Brahma reigns for 100 years before he goes to moksha or salvation. The current Brahma has already spent 50 years; we are in the second half of his life (since each half has 50 years). We are in the seventh manvantara or Vaivasvata Manvantara. Out of the 71 mahayugas in this manvantara, 27 are already over; we are in the 28th. With this understanding we can now make sense of the sankalpa that we utter during Sandhya Vandana or any pooja

Phrase	**Meaning**
Aadhya brahmanaH	(In) The current or reigning Chaturmukha Brahma
Dviteeya paraardhe	(In) the second half

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ShwEta varaaha kalpe	(In) shwEta varaaha kalpa (the current kalpa)
Vaivasvata manvantare	(In) Vaivasvata manvantara (the current manvantara)
Ashtaavimshati tame kaliyuge	(In) the 28th Kaliyuga
Prathama paade	(In) the first quarter
::	::
::	::
Chaandramaanena	In the Lunar calendar
Prabhavaadi shashti samvatsaranaam madhye	In the cycle of 60 samvatsaras starting with Prabhava
< ---- > samvatasare	In the current samvatsara
Dakshinaayane (or uttaraayane)	In dakshinaayana (or Uttaraayana)
< ---- > Rutou	In the current Rutu
< ---- > Maase	In the current masa or month
Krishna (or Shukla) Pakshe	In Krishna (or Shukla) Paksha
< ---- > Tithou	In the current tithi (Prathama to Poornima/amavase)
< ---- > Vaasara	In the weekday (Ravi vaasara to sthira vaasara)
< XYZ > Yoga and <aaBC> Karana	aassociated with XYZ Yoga and ABC karana. People take a short cut and say “shubha yoga , shubha karana”

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